SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH

The Rigveda

The Earliest Religious Poetry of India

Volume I

Translated by

Stephanie W. Jamison
and
Joel P. Brereton

The Rigveda

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THE EARLIEST RELIGIOUS POETRY OF INDIA

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For Stanley, where it all began
bṛ́haspate prathamáṃ vācó ágram
Ṛgveda X.71.1a

JPB and SWJ

For René, my life’s companion

JPB

In memory of my beloved husband (1933–2013)

SWJ

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This translation exists because of Patrick Olivelle, who, some fifteen years ago or so at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in New Orleans in 1998, approached the two of us with a proposition: that we should undertake a quick translation of the R̥gveda for a general audience. Patrick's persuasive powers are well known, and we were intrigued and easily persuaded. Although the "quick" element of the proposition was not exactly fulfilled, we wish to thank Patrick abundantly for starting us on this path, which has provided both of us with the most sustained and satisfying intellectual experience of our lives, and for his constant encouragement and sage advice along the way.

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Over the years we have read R̥gveda with several generations of students, many of whom are now colleagues and friends, and other colleagues have read portions of our translation or discussed it with us, offering helpful and trenchant criticism and supportive encouragement. We cannot name them all, but among the many we wish to mention especially Jim Benson, Wendy Doniger, Harry Falk, Ben Fortson, Oliver Freiberger, Arlo Griffiths, Dieter Gunkel, Mark Hale, Hans Hock, Jan Houben, Joshua Katz, Jared Klein, Sasha Lubotsky, Jesse Lundquist, Craig Melchert, Chris Minkowski, Marianne Oort, Asko Parpola, Ted Proferes, Hanns-Peter Schmidt, Gregory Schopen, Martha Selby, Hartmut Scharfe, Oktor Skjaervø, Rupert Snell, George Thompson, Elizabeth Tucker, Brent Vine, and Jarrod Whitaker.

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A NOTE ON THE TITLE

Although throughout this book we use the more scholarly transliteration of the name of the text, R̥gveda, we have chosen to use the old-fashioned rendering Rigveda in the title of the book itself in order to avoid the problems that might arise from having a diacritic in the first letter of the title.

ABBREVIATIONS

*	indicates an emendation to the text
1st	first person
2nd	second person
3rd	third person
ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*
acc.	accusative
AiĀ	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
AiB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
ĀśvŚS	Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra
AV	Atharvaveda
Aves.	Avestan
AVP	Atharvaveda Paippalāda
AVŚ	Atharvaveda Śaunaka
BD	Bṛhaddevatā
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
dat.	dative
EJVS	*Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies*
EVP	*Études védiques et pāṇinéennes* (Renou 1955–69)
fem.	feminine
HR	*History of Religions*
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal*
JA	*Journal asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JB	Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa
JUB	*Journal of the University of Bombay*
KauB	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
Kl. Sch	*Kleine Schriften*
KS	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
KZ	*Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*
masc.	masculine
MBh	Mahābhārata
MDŚ	Mānava Dharma Śāstra
MSS	*Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*
Nir.	Nirukta

nom.	nominative
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
PB	Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
Pp.	Padapāṭha
R̥V	R̥gveda
ŚāṅkhĀ	Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka
ŚāṅkhGS	Śāṅkhāyana Gr̥hya Sūtra
ŚāṅkhŚS	Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
ŚB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
sg.	singular
StII	*Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*
TĀ	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TS	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
Vālakh.	Vālakhilya
voc.	vocative
VS	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā
VSM	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā Mādhyaṃdina
WZKS	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*
Y	Yasna
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

The Ṛgveda: Introduction

India has a magnificent tradition of religious literature stretching over three and a half millennia, with a vast range of styles and subjects—from almost impersonal reflections on the mysteries of the cosmos, the divine, and humankind's relation to them to deeply intimate expressions of worship. This literature is justly celebrated, not only within the religious traditions that gave rise to the various works but around the world among people with no ties to those religious traditions. The R̥gveda is the first of these monuments, and it can stand with any of the subsequent ones. Its range is very large—encompassing profound and uncompromising meditations on cosmic enigmas, joyful and exuberant tributes to the wonders of the world, ardent praise of the gods and their works, moving and sometimes painful expressions of personal devotion, and penetrating reflections on the ability of mortals to make contact with and affect the divine and cosmic realms through sacrifice and praise. Thus, much of what will distinguish later Indian religious literature is already present in the R̥gveda. Yet, though its name is known, the celebration of the R̥gveda is muted at best, even within its own tradition, and, save for a few famous hymns, its contents go unnoticed outside of that tradition.

India also has a magnificent literary tradition, characterized in great part by sophisticated poetic techniques and devices and a poetic self-consciousness that glories in the transformative work that words can effect on their subjects. Again,

the R̥gveda is the first monument of this literary tradition and at least the equal of the later literature. The exuberance with which the poets press the boundaries of language in order to create their own reflection of the complex and ultimately impenetrable mysteries of the cosmos and the verbal devices they developed to mirror these cosmic intricacies resonate through the rest of the literary tradition. Yet, again, the R̥gveda figures very little in standard accounts of Indian literature and is little read or appreciated as literature.

Thus the R̥gveda is not only the beginning but also one of the paramount expressions of both the religious tradition and the literary tradition, combining these two roles in a text that displays great variety, skill, and beauty. Surely it deserves a modern English translation that makes these riches available to a wider audience. Yet it does not have one; the only readily available complete English translation, the nineteenth-century product of R. T. H. Griffith, conceals rather than reveals the wonders of the R̥gveda and would (properly) discourage any sensitive reader from further pursuit of the text. Why this lacuna? The answer is quite simple: the R̥gveda is very long and very hard. Neither of these factors alone would necessarily hinder translation—both very long texts, like the Sanskrit epics, and very hard texts, like the Avestan Gāthās, are receiving their due—but the combination of the two has proved very daunting. We two translators, after some fifteen years of concentrated effort on the translation and more than forty years of living with and working with the text, can attest to the rigors of the task—but even more to its joys. And we feel privileged to have spent so much time in intimate contact with the poets who shaped such an extraordinary religious and literary achievement at the very dawn of the Indian tradition.

In the introduction that follows we try to give readers some grounding in the world and worldview of the R̥gveda and to provide enough information to approach the translation without undue bafflement. It is not meant as a comprehensive treatment of the many subjects touched on, but only a stepping stone to the text itself and the readers' direct experience of the hymns.

I. Who, What, Where, When?

A. VEDA AND R̥GVEDA

The R̥gveda is the oldest Sanskrit text, composed in an archaic form of the language, known as Vedic or Vedic Sanskrit. It is a collection of over a thousand poems, composed by a number of different poets over the course of some considerable period of time. The poems are primarily hymns praising various gods and ritual elements and procedures, designed to be recited during ritual performance; that is, they are *liturgical* compositions. However, they are also finely crafted and self-conscious *literary* productions of the highest quality.

As the first text in Sanskrit, the R̥gveda is somewhat isolated, and many of the difficulties of its interpretation stem from the fact that there are no parallel or closely contemporary texts. Yet, it is poised between two bodies of textual

material that can contribute to its interpretation, and the characteristic features from these two types of texts, mingled uniquely in the R̥gveda, help account for its distinctive quality. On the one hand, it stands at the end of a long tradition of Indo-European and Indo-Iranian praise poetry, most nearly mirrored in the Old Avestan Gāthās attributed to Zarathustra. On the other, it stands as the earliest of the ritual texts collectively known as the Vedas and forms a part of the interlocking ritual system set forth in the Vedas.

There are four Vedas: the R̥gveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. The first three are the provinces of individual priests, who function together to perform the solemn rituals of the Vedic liturgical system, later, in the middle Vedic period, known as *śrauta* rituals. Each of those three Vedas also represents a different type of ritual speech. Thus, the R̥gveda belongs to the *Hotar* priest, who *recites* or *chants* the poetry; the Sāmaveda to the *Udgātar* priest, who *sings* the poetry to set tunes called *sāman*s. The vast majority of the verbal material in the Sāmaveda is borrowed from the R̥gveda. The Yajurveda is the realm of the *Adhvaryu* priest; his verbal product is the *yajus*, a short verbal formula that generally accompanies the *physical actions* that are the main task of the Adhvaryu. Each of these three priests is accompanied by other priests who share their principal functions. So in the later soma ritual, for example, the number of priests can be sixteen or seventeen. The Atharvaveda stands outside of this ritual system and consists primarily of hymns and spells of a more "popular" nature, often magical or healing. Despite its lack of connection to the solemn ritual, the Atharvaveda is especially important for R̥gvedic studies because it is linguistically the closest text to the R̥gveda and is thus the second oldest text in Sanskrit. The two texts also share a number of passages and hymns, although the Atharvaveda often varies the wording or order of verses. The R̥gvedic hymns found also in the Atharvaveda are often drawn from the younger layers of the R̥gveda.

We will treat the structure of the text in more detail below; here we will provide only the most general outline. The text consists of 1028 hymns divided into ten books or *maṇḍala*s (lit. "circles"), of varying lengths. The arrangement of the hymns within each maṇḍala and the arrangement of the maṇḍalas themselves attest strongly to the deliberate quality of the collection and organization of the hymns, as we will demonstrate below. Maṇḍalas II–VII are known as the "Family Books," each attributed to a different bardic family. Maṇḍala VIII contains smaller collections attributed to particular poets or poetic families, and has a somewhat aberrant character. Maṇḍala IX contains all and only the hymns dedicated to Soma Pavamāna, "self-purifying soma," the deified ritual drink at a particular moment in its ritual preparation. Maṇḍalas I and X were added to the collection later, though they both contain much that is contemporaneous with the linguistic and religious level of the core parts of the R̥gveda, as well as some more recent and "popular" material. Both I and X contain exactly 191 hymns, a synchronicity that was clearly not by chance.

B. DATE AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE ṚGVEDA

As was mentioned above, the Ṛgveda is part of the long tradition of Indo-European praise poetry, composed and performed orally and deploying inherited set verbal formulae, on which the poets also ring changes. Thus, whatever date(s) we assign to the actual composition of the particular hymns found in the text, the temporal horizon of the Ṛgveda stretches a good deal further back, in that the poetic techniques and even some of its precise verbal realizations go back many centuries, even millennia.

The dating of the Ṛgveda has been and is likely to remain a matter of contention and reconsideration because as yet little has been uncovered in the material record or in the hymns themselves that allows us to date the period of the Ṛgvedic hymns. One attempt at dating begins with an absence. Since the Ṛgveda does not mention iron but does mention other kinds of metal, it is likely a pre–Iron Age, Bronze Age text. The dates at which iron appears in the archaeological record in South Asia differ in different parts of the subcontinent. For the northwest, which comprises the geographic horizon of the Ṛgveda, iron began to be manufactured around 1200–1000 BCE. The Ṛgvedic hymns, therefore, would have to have been composed no later than this period. However, iron is attested in the Atharvaveda. While the Ṛgveda is older than the Atharvaveda, there is no basis for assuming a substantial gap in time between the end of the Ṛgvedic period and the Atharvaveda. Therefore the date of the latest portions of the Ṛgveda is not likely to be very much earlier that 1200–1000 BCE. It is also likely that the period of the composition of Ṛgvedic hymns did not extend more than several centuries before this terminus ad quem. Witzel (in Jamison and Witzel 1992: 2 n. 2) has noted that the poets and kings mentioned in the *anukramaṇī*s (indices) and in the hymns themselves comprise perhaps five or six generations. Generously rounding these numbers, we can then place the period of the composition of the Ṛgvedic hymns sometime within the period 1400–1000 BCE or, even more approximately, within the second half of the second millennium BCE. At best these dates encompass only the hymns of the Ṛgveda as we have them. The poetic conventions on which the Ṛgveda was built are very much older, extending back to the Indo-Iranian period with roots into the Indo-European period. The Ṛgveda is only the surface of a very deep tradition.

While the date of the Ṛgveda remains problematic, the hymns provide information that helps identify the geographic area in which the hymns were composed. Above all, the rivers mentioned in the text help establish the place of the Ṛgveda. These rivers range from the Kabul and Kurram rivers in present-day Afghanistan to the Ganges in the east. Its center is the greater Punjab, the region of the Indus and its major tributaries. Following the likely internal chronology of the Ṛgveda, geographic references in the text suggest a movement from the northwest toward the east. Thus while the earliest parts of the Ṛgveda were likely composed in the northwest, in the latest parts of the text the area has extended further into the subcontinent, and its center has shifted toward Kurukṣetra, roughly the area of the modern state of Haryana.

One of the reasons that the Ṛgveda is difficult to date is that there is no material evidence that we can clearly associate with the people who composed the Ṛgveda, the people who called themselves Āryas. Nor would we expect very much material evidence, since the hymns make no mention of any permanent religious structures or enduring settlements. The Āryas formed instead a semi-nomadic pastoralist society, in which seasons of settlement alternated with seasons of migration. This migration likely contributed to the extension of the culture into new areas. The period of movement was also the season of conflict in the competition for land and the season of cattle-raiding, especially for younger males eager to acquire assets on which to establish their own livelihood. Cattle were the primary source of wealth, although the hymns also mention sheep, buffaloes, goats, and camels. Horses too were essential and prized, since they enabled the Āryas' mobility and contributed to their success in battle. Although the economy was fundamentally pastoral, the Āryas practiced some agriculture during the times of settlement; one hymn (IV.57) specifically celebrates agricultural divinities, and the plow is occasionally mentioned. The hymns refer to *yáva* "barley" or "field grain," which was used both for food and in the rituals. The Ṛgveda does not attest rice cultivation.

In addition to the absence of material remains, another difficulty in describing the cultural context of the Ṛgveda is that its hymns depict only a part of the religion and society at the period. First, the Ṛgveda represents the continuation of an elite tradition also attested in the Avesta and therefore quite ancient. As such, it reflects the religious practice only of the upper strata of Ārya society. Second, it is primarily a collection of liturgical hymns for use in the soma sacrifice, surely the most prestigious ritual of the period but still only one kind of ritual, representing a particular and limited set of religious concerns. Finally, the soma sacrifices were sponsored and performed by socially elite men, and they reflected the religious concerns of these men. The text did not directly address the religious lives of women or of other social classes nor indeed even other aspects of the religious lives of elite males. Thus, while the Ṛgveda is a sizable text and from it we can derive a great deal of information about the soma rite and about those who participated in it, we are still dealing only with a segment of Ārya religion and society. However, we can gather information on non-elite concerns and on the daily life and pursuits of the elite incidentally, often through similes or imagery modeling ritual elements and procedures or through the crediting of gods with activities also appropriate to humans, such as warfare.

Indirectly, we can also get some information about other aspects of religion. First, although the soma rite was primarily focused on the god Indra, already in the Ṛgvedic period it had begun to incorporate the worship of gods around whom independent ritual traditions existed. So, for example, the Aśvins were worshiped already during the Indo-Iranian period and in the Pravargya rite, which is not a soma ritual. But already in the Ṛgvedic period the Aśvins were recipients of soma, and by the time of the later Veda the Pravargya rite had been incorporated into the soma tradition. Moreover, especially in book X, there are hymns that address a

variety of religious interests separate from those of the soma rite. There are funeral (X.14–16) and wedding (X.85) hymns. There are hymns against cowives (X.145), against rivals (X.166), against witchcraft (X.155), against miscarriage (X.162), and against disease (X.161, 163). There are hymns for the safety of cattle (X.169), for conception (X.183), and for successful birth (X.184). In short the R̥gveda already attests rites that address domestic and individual issues principally associated with the Atharvaveda. These hymns point to substantial ritual activity outside of the soma rituals.

C. WHAT DO THE HYMNS DO?

The overwhelming majority of R̥gvedic hymns have as their major aim to praise the god(s) to whom the hymn is dedicated and to induce said god(s) to repay the praise with requested favors. To a certain extent different gods receive different types of praise, but the praise generally focuses on the appearance, qualities, and power of the gods and on their remarkable deeds. Some divinities attract particular attention to their appearance: for instance, the seductive beauty of Dawn, the glittering ostentation of the Maruts, the endlessly fascinating transformations of physical fire and its divine embodiment Agni. Others, like the Ādityas, have few if any physical characteristics, but are more celebrated for their mental and moral qualities. The supernatural powers of almost all the gods receive abundant praise, though again the types of power lauded differ from god to god.

Their powers are actualized in their deeds, the recounting of which occupies a large portion of many R̥gvedic hymns. Some gods have a robust narrative mythology, and episodes from this mythology are constantly related or alluded to; the most prominent example is Indra with his catalogue of great victories over both divine and mortal enemies. Those without much narrative mythology tend to be credited with general cosmogonic deeds or with the regular maintaining and ordering of the world and its inhabitants.

This praise of divine powers and deeds is not a disinterested act, for the aim is to persuade or constrain the gods to mobilize these same powers on behalf of their worshipers and to replicate their great deeds in the present for the benefit of these same worshipers. In the all-pervasive system of reciprocity and exchange that might be termed the dominant social ideology underlying the R̥gveda, praise of the gods *requires* requital: they must provide recompense for what they receive from those praising them. Worshipers are not shy about specifying what they want in exchange: the good things of this world—wealth, especially in livestock and gold, sons, and a long lifespan—and divine aid in defeating opponents, be they enemies in battle or rival sacrificers. The sign that the praise has been successful is the epiphany of the god(s) addressed, so that many hymns urgently invite the dedicand(s) to journey to the particular sacrifice in which the poet is participating and then jubilantly proclaim the arrival of the god(s) at that particular sacrificial ground as the ritual is taking place.

This epiphany at the sacrifice brings us back to the liturgical role of the hymns, for it should never be forgotten that almost all the hymns in the Ṛgveda were composed to accompany the physical acts of the ritual, which are happening simultaneously with the recitation. But the word "accompany" here is too weak. The hymns are not merely verbal background music, as it were. As will be discussed further below, another important aspect of Vedic ideology is the belief in the power of the word: words make things happen. The physical actions of ritual alone would be insufficient; it is the skillfully crafted, properly formulated hymn, the verbal portion of the ritual, that makes the liturgical acts effective.

While the great majority of Ṛgvedic hymns have a liturgical form that obviously reflects the soma rite, there are examples in which this model is not evident. Among them are the *ākhyāna* or "narrative" hymns, as Oldenberg (1883, 1885) called them, which take the form of a dialogue between two or more figures. These hymns occur in the later portions of the Ṛgveda, especially book X. They include, for example, dialogues between the sage Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā (I.179); between Yama and his twin sister Yamī (X.10); between the celestial Apsaras Urvaśī and her abandoned mortal husband Purūravas (X.95); among the monkey Vṛṣākapi, the god Indra, and Indra's wife Indrāṇī (X.86); and between Indra's dog, Saramā, and the tribe of Paṇis (X.108). It is possible that some of these hymns comment on the soma rite, but others were composed for different ritual purposes, which have to be surmised, if they can be surmised at all, from the contents of the hymns. Our introductions to individual hymns discuss possible applications. A few may represent individual or domestic concerns, such as the recovery of lost cattle (X.108); others may embody the differing viewpoints of ongoing ritual controversies (I.179) or provide a dramatic modeling of a particularly important ritual (the Horse Sacrifice in X.86) or the mythological underpinning for a series of hymns (X.10 for the following funeral hymns). An evergreen controversy concerns the form of the ākhyāna hymns. Oldenberg (1885) argued that the oldest type of epic composition mixed poetry and prose. The poetry principally consisted of the words spoken by characters in the narrative, and the prose provided the narrative context for the verses. This form is found in the Pāli Jātakas, the stories of the Buddha's former births, for example, in which the verses are considered canonical but the connecting prose is not. Oldenberg suggested that the ākhyāna hymns conformed to this type and that what we have preserved is a skeleton of canonical dialogue that originally had prose narrative attached to it. Oldenberg's theory has the advantage of explaining why these hymns are difficult to interpret and why even the speakers of particular verses are not readily identifiable. While we find the theory attractive, many scholars have found it unnecessary and understand these hymns to have been recited as they are transmitted to us.

There are also hymns that, though they may be ritually employed in the later Veda, were perhaps not composed for ritual use. Gonda (1978: 25–38) compares some of these hymns to medieval stotras: expressions of emotion, praise, and devotion to the gods. However, such functions do not preclude their application in rites, even if their

original ritual context is not clear to us. A better possibility for non-liturgical hymns is the type that comments on the ritual and its meaning. Generally occurring in the latest strata of the Ṛgveda, these include X.129, the Nāsadīyasūkta ("that not existing did not exist"); X.121, the Hiraṇyagarbhasūkta ("Golden Embryo"); X.90, the Puruṣasūkta ("Hymn of the Man"); and I.164, the "Riddle Hymn" of Dīrghatamas. These are sometimes called the "philosophical" or "speculative" hymns of the Ṛgveda, but this is a misleading description, since they are not primarily abstract philosophic reflections on the nature of things. Rather, they are better viewed as forerunners of the Brāhmaṇa and Āraṇyaka texts that interpret the ritual in general, particular rituals, or aspects of the ritual. So, for example, X.90 comments on the sacrifice through the symbol of the "Man," which represents both the world and the sacrifice. X.121 concerns the royal consecration rite, and X.129 sets forth the creative power of knowledge and therefore the power of the poets and priests who possess it. In many of these hymns the meaning of the ritual is expressed in terms of a cosmogony or cosmology. While such hymns share many themes and draw upon common stores of symbols, there is not a single Ṛgvedic cosmogony or a single Ṛgvedic cosmology to which they refer. Rather, they represent imaginable worlds that explain why things are as they are. To force the hymns into the straitjacket of a unitary view of the world underestimates the power and originality of the poets who produced these cosmogonic and cosmological models.

D. THE POET

Who is the poet, and why is he composing poetry? The poets participate in an elaborate patronage system. They are hirelings, but of a very superior sort. As craftsmen of the word, their contribution to the success of the sacrifice that establishes and maintains the mutually beneficial relationship between men and gods is critical, and they serve the patrons, often royal patrons (whatever "royal" meant at this period), who arrange for and underwrite the sacrifice. The poet provides the praise poetry that the patron needs to put the gods in his debt, and he speaks on behalf of his patron, in making specific requests of the gods for goods and services. The poet's reward comes as a second-hand or indirect benefit of the success of his verbal labors: the patron should receive from the gods what he asked for, and he provides some portion of that bounty to the poet in recompense. This payment from his patron is sometimes celebrated by the poet at the end of his hymn, in a genre known as the *dānastuti*, literally "praise of the gift," in which the largesse of the patron—cows, horses, gold, women—is catalogued and glorified. Or, if it is less than expected or desired, scorned. The tone of the dānastuti is often teasing and jokey, and the language colloquial.

But the making of poetry is not simply a business proposition. Poets take great pride in their work and often reflect on their part in the poetic tradition and also on their ability to use the tools of the tradition in innovative and creative ways. They are self-conscious, naming themselves and addressing themselves, calling attention

to their verbal tricks and achievements and their ability to bring fame and material success to their patrons and glory to their gods. Some poets have very distinctive poetic personalities, as we will have occasion to remark throughout the translation.

The R̥gvedic poet's social position and his role in the patronage economy was clearly inherited from Indo-Iranian and Indo-European times, and one of the closest parallels is found in ancient Greek, in the poetry of Pindar (5th century BCE), who was hired to celebrate the victors in the various Greek games and did so in verse as elaborate, finely crafted, and deliberately obscure as that found in the R̥gveda. For further on the Indo-European poet, see Watkins (1995).

E. STRUCTURE OF THE R̥GVEDA

The R̥gveda comprises 1028 *sūkta*s or hymns, which contain a total of slightly more than 10,500 verses and which are divided into ten maṇḍalas, or books, of uneven size. Within each maṇḍala there is a further division of the hymns into *anuvāka*s or "recitations" consisting of several hymns. The number of hymns in an anuvāka varies within a maṇḍala, and the number of anuvākas in each maṇḍala varies from maṇḍala to maṇḍala. As its name suggests, the anuvāka division was created principally to provide convenient units for memorization and recitation. Although this division is occasionally indicated in editions of the R̥gveda, we have not included it in the translation. There is a second division of the R̥gvedic corpus into eight *aṣṭaka*s, but this is a purely mechanical arrangement also created to facilitate memorization. In this latter division each of the eight aṣṭakas has eight *adhyāya*s, each adhyāya has thirty-three *varga*s, and each varga has five verses. Since unlike the division of the text into maṇḍalas, neither of these divisions reflects the contents of the R̥gveda, therefore we will use the division into maṇḍalas exclusively.

Invaluable work on the organization and history of the R̥gveda was done by Bergaigne (1886, 1887) and Oldenberg (1888: 191–270), ably summarized and amplified by Witzel (1995a, 1997). Following their work, the structure of the R̥gveda and the broad outlines of its compositional history are as follows. The core of the R̥gveda and its oldest part are the "Family Books," so called because the hymns in each maṇḍala are attributed to poets belonging to the same family lineage. These comprise Maṇḍalas II–VII. The family lineages are the following:

II Gr̥tsamada
III Viśvāmitra
IV Vāmadeva
V Atri
VI Bharadvāja
VII Vasiṣṭha

Within the R̥gvedic corpus, the six Family Books are generally ordered according to the increasing number of hymns in each successive maṇḍala. So Maṇḍala II contains the fewest number of hymns and VII the greatest. Within each Family Book

the hymns are ordered first by deity. Thus the hymns to Agni come first, followed by those to Indra. After these collections are the hymns to other deities, generally arranged by the decreasing number of hymns to each deity within the maṇḍala. Within each deity collection the hymns are arranged by their length, beginning with the longest hymns. If two hymns are of equal length, they are ordered according to meter, with the hymns in longer meters placed before those in shorter meters.

The arrangement of the Family Books and their hymns, therefore, functions like an index. If you know the poet (and therefore the family of the poet), the deity to whom the hymn is addressed, the number of verses in the hymn, and the meter, then, in principle at least, you can locate the hymn within the collection. Perhaps for that reason, the oral recitation of a R̥gvedic hymn is traditionally preceded by the identification of the poet, deity, and meter. It is this kind of information that is provided by the anukramaṇīs or indices to the R̥gveda. Because the anukramaṇīs come from a later period, there has been some question about the value of their information for the R̥gvedic period. Some of the identifications of poets, in book X in particular, are derived from the content of the hymns and can be rather wonderfully fantastic. In that book, for example, there are hymns attributed to serpents (X.76 and 94), to the "Golden Embryo," Hiraṇyagarbha (X.121), to the god Indra (X.48–50), and to Yama (X.14) and Yamī (X.154), the first humans. Such identifications are not exclusive to book X. Among the possible composers of VIII.67 are listed Matsya Sāmmada, king of the sea creatures, and fish that have been caught in a net. Also, in the ākhyāna hymns and any other hymn in which the verses are supposed to be spoken by a god or a legendary being, the anukramaṇīs ascribe authorship to that god or being. Thus, the composition of the dialogue among the monkey Vr̥ṣākapi, the god Indra, and his wife Indrāṇī (X.86) is attributed to the three of them.

However, these creative identifications are much more the exception than the rule. Even though the anukramaṇīs were composed and redacted long after the R̥gvedic period, they are an invaluable resource, for, by and large, their identifications of the poets of hymns are plausible. The collections they mark by assigning groups of hymns to certain poets or poetic circles correspond to the organization of the R̥gveda and to verbal, metrical, and thematic connections among these hymns. The great majority of the roughly five hundred poets named in the anukramaṇīs also appear in Pravara lists of brahmin ancestors (Mahadevan forthcoming), which supports the plausibility of the anukramaṇī identifications. Therefore, the traditions transmitted in the anukramaṇīs can be a helpful guide in understanding relationships among hymns, in identifying collections of hymns, and in determining the relative ages of hymns.

Generally younger than the Family Books, Maṇḍala VIII largely comprises the hymns of two poetic traditions: that of the Kāṇvas (in 1–48 and 60–66) and that of the Āṅgirases (in 67–103). The hymns of the Āṅgirasa group are probably somewhat younger than those of the Kāṇva group. However, not all the hymns in either of these two groups are from Kāṇva or Āṅgirasa poets. Rather, both collections

include hymns by poets who belong to other families and are known in other maṇḍalas. These hymns were probably added to book VIII because they were composed in forms and meters characteristic of the hymns of VIII. Both the Kāṇva and the Āṅgirasa collections in VIII consist of a large number of hymns whose verses are arranged in *pragātha*s or *tr̥ca*s, that is, in sequences of units (strophes) consisting of two or three verses. There are pragāthas and tr̥cas outside of VIII and non-strophic hymns in VIII, but because of the predominance of these structures in that book, pragātha and tr̥ca poetry of various poets was relocated into VIII. The significance of this collection is not entirely clear, although the marked forms of the hymns suggest that they or the priests who produced them may have had a distinct ritual function, and it is noteworthy that a large proportion of the R̥gvedic material borrowed into the Sāmaveda comes from VIII. It may be that the priests who created Maṇḍala VIII were, like the Sāmavedic priests, those who chanted R̥gvedic verses. The arrangement of hymns in VIII generally follows that of the Family Books: they are first organized by poet or poetic circle and then by deity. But the organization of the book is less transparent than that of the Family Books.

Maṇḍala I also consists of two collections. One, I.51–191, probably dates from around the time of the Kāṇva hymns of VIII, and the other, I.1–50, is slightly later than the Āṅgirasa hymns of VIII. The collection of I.51–191 consists of the hymns of nine groups of poets, organized according to the same principles as the Family Books. The collection of I.1–50 consists of hymns in six groups, each attributed to a single poet. Within each of these six groups, the hymns are collected by deity, but the six differ in their arrangement of the hymns within the deity collections. The groups of I.1–50 are also distinguished by the prevalence of hymns in *gāyatrī* meter and in pragāthas, like the hymns of VIII, while the hymns of I.51–191 are primarily in *triṣṭubh* and *jagatī* meter.

Maṇḍala IX is unusual, because it is a liturgical collection of hymns to Soma Pavamāna, the soma "purifying itself" as it runs across or through the sheep's wool filter. It includes hymns by poets already known from the Family Books as well as by later poets. The collection is dominated especially by poets from books I, V, and VIII. It was therefore created after the Family Books and contains hymns from various periods. Like the Family Books, it is arranged in groups according to meter and then within each metrical grouping, according to decreasing number of verses.

Maṇḍala X is a collection of hymns that belong to the youngest strata of the R̥gveda and forms a kind of appendix to the text. However, it shows organizational principles comparable to those we have seen in the other books. It consists of collections of hymns by individual poets, which are ordered according to the decreasing number of hymns in each collection or, when collections contain an equal number of hymns, according to the number of verses in the first hymn of the collection. By roughly the second half of X, the collections are reduced to single hymns by individual poets. Finally, there is a short and late supplement to the R̥gvedic collection, the Vālakhilya hymns, which are collected in VIII.49–59.

While this is the general organization of the text, there are many exceptions to these ordering principles. So, for example, we remarked above that the Family Books, II–VII, are ordered from the shortest to the longest. While this is generally true, it is not completely the case. Consider the list of the Family Books and the total number of hymns in each:

II	43 hymns
III	62 hymns
IV	58 hymns
V	87 hymns
VI	75 hymns
VII	104 hymns

Although we would have expected the sequence of maṇḍalas to show a steadily increasing number of hymns, instead book IV has fewer hymns than III and book VI fewer than V. In a similar fashion, hymns can appear out of order within the various groupings that make up both the Family Books and the other books of the R̥gveda. Such discrepancies have arisen through insertions of hymns and redactional combinations and divisions of hymns. These alterations occurred after the initial collection of the R̥gveda, when the order of books and hymns was established, and by the time or at the time of Śākalya's final redaction of the text around the middle of first millennium BCE. Attention to these discrepancies can be an effective tool in reconstructing the compositional history of individual hymns and of groupings of hymns, since they allow us to see where an alteration has occurred. Oldenberg (1888: 193–94) provides the following example. In a series of single hymns with decreasing numbers of verses, V.83 is a hymn to Parjanya of ten verses and V.85 is a hymn to Varuṇa of eight verses. Between the two is V.84, a hymn to Earth of three verses. Clearly the hymn to Earth is out of sequence and was likely inserted between the hymns to Parjanya and to Varuṇa. While the fact of its insertion is obvious, there are several possible explanations for how and why this occurred. For example, V.84 could be a later composition that was later added to the R̥gveda, or it could have been composed earlier but have been moved to its current place within the collection. In either case, this little hymn is actually a riddle depicting Earth during a violent storm and must have been felt as an appropriate pendant to the Parjanya hymn (see Jamison 2013).

II. History of the R̥gvedic Text

A. LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUE

The R̥gveda was composed in an archaic form of Sanskrit that is richer in forms and less grammatically fixed than Classical Sanskrit, but essentially identical in structure. For further discussion of the language, see section VII below. The text

was composed entirely orally and transmitted entirely orally for a very long time, probably several millennia. But it was a type of oral composition very different from what that designation now generally brings to mind in scholarly, especially Homeric, circles. It was not an anonymous floating body of infinitely variable verbal material (re-)composed anew at every performance, generated in great part from fixed formulae that formed the poet's repertoire. In contrast to the vast sprawl of epic, on which the usual model of oral-formulaic composition was formed and tested, R̥gvedic oral composition was small-scale and verbally complex. Though orally composed and making use of traditional verbal material, each hymn was composed by a particular poet, who fixed the hymn at the time of composition and who "owned" it, and it was transmitted in this fixed form thereafter.

R̥gvedic verbal formulae work very differently from those in epic composition. Rather than deploying fairly sizable, metrically defined, and invariant pieces—ready-made surface structures, in the felicitous phrase of Paul Kiparsky (1976: 83)—our poets seem to operate with *deep-structure* formulae. Invariant repetition is fairly rare, and when it occurs, the repeated formulae tend to be short, generally shorter than the *pāda* (= verse line) and not necessarily metrically fixed. But the poets often assume knowledge of an underlying formula, which seldom or never surfaces as such, but which they ring changes on—by lexical or grammatical substitution, scrambling, semantic reversal, and the like, confounding the expectations of their audience while drawing upon their shared knowledge of the underlying verbal expression. These deep-structure formulae tend to be shared across bardic families, and we can in fact sometimes identify cognate formulae in other Indo-European poetic traditions, especially in the Old Avestan Gāthās.

B. PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION

The structure of the R̥gveda points to several stages in the creation of the R̥gvedic text as we now have it. Collections of hymns were first made by the families of poets who produced them, and these early collections defined the various poetic traditions and helped train new poets within those traditions. At some point a unified consolidation was made of six family traditions, which formed the original collection of the Family Books, II–VII. As discussed above, the books were arranged from shortest to longest and the hymns of each book were organized according to the same principles. Then, probably at several intervals, the hymns of books I and VIII (except for the Vālakhilya hymns) were added, and book IX was assembled from hymns composed by poets of the other books of the R̥gveda and from hymns of younger poets. The last major additions to the collection were the hymns of book X.

We do not know the precise mechanism for the formation of the R̥gvedic collection or the circumstances that brought it about. There must have been some centralized authority or agency that could consolidate the different family traditions and impose a single set of organizational principles on their collections. Michael

Witzel (cf. 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 2003) has suggested that this authority was first the Bharata tribe, as it attained hegemony over the other Vedic tribes during the R̥gvedic period, and then later the Kuru state, which arose around 1000 BCE. In his view, the initial collection and organization of the Family Books, the Kāṇva hymns of VIII, and the nine collections of I.51–191 occurred under the Bharatas, and the complete collection of the R̥gveda under the Kurus. These consolidations of the religious traditions supported the political consolidations of the Bharatas and of the Kurus and reinforced their rule by means of a unified religious practice approximating a state religion. The Kuru period saw the creation not only of the complete R̥gveda but also of the other *saṃhitā*s, and the fixation and canonization of Vedic sacrifices. The Vedic rites created at this time were composites, fashioned from different family traditions. They included extended recitations constituted of verses extracted from various parts of the R̥gveda and thus from various family traditions. The purpose of such composite rites was to create a ritual system that represented the unity of the Vedic tradition. This process is already apparent in late hymns of the R̥gveda itself (cf. Proferes 2003a). For example, R̥V IX.67 is a hymn to "self-purifying" soma. Rather than being the product of a particular poet or even a particular family of poets, it includes verses from poets representing the principal brahmin lineages. It reflects an attempt to create an "ecumenical" liturgy, as Proferes (2003a: 8) calls it, one in which all the major poetic traditions had a place.

The creation of the R̥gvedic Saṃhitā reflected a significant ritual change, since it marked an emphasis on liturgical appropriation and repetition of earlier material rather than, as in the R̥gvedic period itself, on the creation of new hymns. However, the tradition of R̥gvedic composition did not simply come to a halt at the close of the R̥gvedic period. The R̥gveda Khila (Scheftelowitz 1906) is a collection of hymns that do not form part of the Śākalya recension. Some of these hymns may go back to the R̥gvedic period, but most were likely composed in the following period, during which the hymns, chants, and recitations of the Atharvaveda, the Sāmaveda, and the Yajurveda were composed or assembled. The Atharvaveda itself also represents the extension of hymnic composition into a wider variety of ritual contexts, a process already visible in R̥gveda book X. Beyond the Veda, elements and techniques typical of R̥gvedic composition appear in later *praśasti*s, epic poetry, and even in *kāvya* (see Jamison 2007: chap. 4).

The R̥gveda did not remain unchanged after its collection. As described above, the collection of hymns was arranged according to definable principles, but the text of the R̥gveda we have does not always follow these principles. Most of the changes were made at an early period since they are reflected in all the versions of the R̥gveda that we have or that are described in later literature. These versions were the product of Vedic schools or *śākhā*s, which became the institutions through which the R̥gveda collection was preserved and transmitted.

The R̥gveda translated here is the R̥gveda of the Śākala school, established by Śākalya, a teacher of the late Vedic period. There were other schools that produced other recensions of the R̥gveda, although most of these other recensions are now

lost. The Caraṇavyūha, a Yajurvedic Pariśiṣṭa, lists five R̥gvedic schools: Śākala, Bāṣkala, Āśvalāyana, Śāṅkhāyana, and Māṇḍūkāyana. Other sources give larger numbers of R̥gvedic schools. There are seven according to the Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa, and twenty-one according to Patañjali (ca. 150 BCE), although the last number reflects not the number of versions of the R̥gveda, but rather of schools that studied the R̥gveda. Of the five recensions mentioned in the Caraṇavyūha, the oldest may be the Māṇḍūkāyana, although little is known about it. The Bāṣkala school may have survived into the sixteenth century (Chaubey 2009: vii), and perhaps the Bāṣkala R̥gveda still exists somewhere in manuscript. But even without a manuscript, much is known about it from other texts. It probably dates to around the time of the Śākala recension and was close to the Śākala recension in substance. According to the Anuvākānukramaṇī, the Bāṣkala R̥gveda included the first seven hymns of the Vālakhilya, but rejected the other four, and after R̥V X.191, the last hymn in the Śākala recension, it had a second *saṃjñāna* hymn, or hymn of "agreement," consisting of fifteen verses. It also rearranged Maṇḍala I, so that the Kutsa collection (I.94–115) followed the Parucchepa collection (I.127–139). This rearrangement conforms better to the expected order of the collections that constitute Maṇḍala I and therefore may represent either an older tradition than that of the Śākala recension or a later correction made according to perceived principles. The Āśvalāyana R̥gveda has recently been published (Chaubey 2009). It was based on the Śākala recension, but includes an additional 212 verses, all of which are later than the rest of the R̥gveda. The Śāṅkhāyana R̥gveda was very similar to the Āśvalāyana R̥gveda. A sixth R̥gvedic school was the Śaiśirīya school, mentioned in the R̥gveda Prātiśākhya. Its recension again closely resembled the Śākala recension and indeed the Śaiśirīya school might have derived from the Śākala school or have been merged with it (cf. Bronkhorst 1982/83). It again contained a few more verses than does the Śākala recension. In short, the differences among the reported and attested recensions of the R̥gveda are very minor, consisting of variant ordering of some existing materials and the inclusion or not of a relatively few late verses. There seems no need to mourn the loss of these recensions.

These schools produced a saṃhitā text, that is, a continuous text of the R̥gveda that includes the phonological alterations that occur between words—a phenomenon characteristic of the Sanskrit language in general known as *sandhi* or "putting together." It is this basic form of the hymns that would have been recited in their ritual contexts. But in order to secure the text, these schools also produced other forms of the R̥gveda that supported its memorization. According to Patañjali, Śākalya not only created a recension of the saṃhitā text, but also a *padapāṭha* text. This latter text provides a grammatical analysis of the words of the R̥gveda by restoring the forms of the words before the application of the sandhi rules when the words are strung together. It shows the schools' interest not only in preserving and transmitting the R̥gveda, but also in understanding the text they transmitted.

This history gives us reason to be confident that the Śākala R̥gveda is close to the R̥gveda that was created at the beginning of the first millennium, even though

the Śākala recension probably dates to some five hundred years later. We also have evidence for minor changes in the Śākala text itself. In the Śākala Padapāṭha, there is no analysis for six verses in the Saṃhitā: VII.59.12, X.20.1, 121.10, 190.1–3. They are probably missing from Padapāṭha analysis because they were not part of the text of the Ṛgveda at the time of the creation of the Padapāṭha, but were added to the Śākala text at a later period. Note again that these adjustments primarily occur in book X, the latest part of the Ṛgveda and apparently its most fluid.

When we say that the Śākala Ṛgveda is substantially the text created at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, we need to acknowledge one significant area in which the Ṛgveda recensions show demonstrable change since the collection of the Ṛgveda. This is in the phonetics of the text. The recitation of the Ṛgveda in different regions and times apparently reflected the different contemporary dialects and conventions of recitation in those regions and times. Such change is apparent in the Śākala recension in its handling of the phonological alterations that take place between words. The Śākala school imposed a further set of euphonic or sandhi rules on the text that developed during the centuries between the composition of the text and the Śākala recension. The result is that the saṃhitā text does not always reflect the metrical structure of the verses. In most cases, the changes are sufficiently regular that it is not difficult to restore the text to its metrical shape. For example, in the saṃhitā text the last verse of the first hymn of the Ṛgveda reads: I.1.9 *sá naḥ pitéva sūnávé, 'gne sūpāyanó bhava / sácasvā naḥ svastáye*. This hymn is composed in gāyatrī meter, so it ought to have eight syllables in each pāda. But the elision at the beginning of pāda b gives a line of seven syllables, and pāda c also apparently has seven syllables. Originally, the verse must have been recited without the elision in b: *sá naḥ pitéva sūnáve, ágne sūpāyanó bhava*. And in pāda c *svastáye* must have been recited quadrasyllabically *su(v)astáye*. While it is usually not difficult to restore the meter, that work has been done for us in the edition of the Ṛgveda by Barend A. van Nooten and Gary B. Holland (1994), which gives the metrically restored text of the Śākala recension.

These kinds of phonetic and euphonic changes were natural in the oral transmission of the text, more natural than the rigid oral preservation of the text after the Vedic period. Because such changes are natural, they were likely not deliberate alterations. More importantly, the reciters of the Ṛgveda did not deliberately change and, for the most part, did not change at all the order of the books of the Ṛgveda, the order of verses within hymns, the words of the hymns, or their grammar. There were a few—but relatively few—changes to the order of hymns, such as that reflected in the difference between the Bāṣkala and Śākala recensions in the order of Maṇḍala I. This early "freezing" of the text is very important and one of the characteristics that makes the Ṛgveda so valuable for understanding the linguistic, religious, and literary history of South Asia. The Ṛgvedic tradition has preserved a very ancient literature with extraordinary fidelity, with no grammatical or lexical

modernization or adjustment of contents to later conceptual conditions. It could have been otherwise. In R̥gvedic hymns that also appear in the Atharvaveda, the latter text not uncommonly shows a different verse order, and in both Atharvavedic and Sāmavedic versions of R̥gvedic hymns there can be differences in wording and in grammatical forms. In these cases, with few if any exceptions, the R̥gvedic version of the hymn is the older, and the versions of the other Vedas are modifications.

Up to the creation of the recensions of the R̥gveda and long afterward, the transmission of the R̥gveda was oral. At some point, however, the R̥gvedic schools did produce manuscripts of the text. It is difficult to say when this occurred, but the transmission of the text likely remained exclusively oral at least until around 1000 CE. The oldest manuscript in the collection of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute collection dates only to 1464; the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi has an older R̥gveda manuscript from the fourteenth century—thus a gap of considerably over two millennia between the fixation of the text and our earliest written evidence for it. Even when these activities did begin to occur, copying and preserving manuscripts never displaced memorization of the text as the primary means of transmission of the R̥gveda until quite modern times.

C. INDIGENOUS COMMENTARIAL TRADITION

With regard to indigenous commentary, the situation of the R̥gveda differs markedly from that of standard Classical Sanskrit texts, in that there is no unbroken commentarial tradition that might preserve the understanding of the text by the authors and audience at the time of composition. Although we find implicit commentary on some parts of the R̥gveda already in later Vedic texts, it is clear that in many case this "commentary" is based more on adaptation, speculation, or fancy than on a direct transmission of the purport of the text, as when the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XI.5.1) sketches a narrative background for the Purūravas and Urvaśī dialogue (R̥V X.95) that distorts or misunderstands crucial portions of the hymn.

The first complete de facto commentary on the R̥gveda, dating probably from the late Vedic period, is Śākalya's Padapāṭha mentioned above, which simply consists of an effectively linguistic analysis of the continuous text (the Saṃhitāpāṭha) of the R̥gveda into individual words (*pada*s). Because of sandhi, an important and pervasive feature of the Sanskrit language whereby all words undergo significant phonological adjustment to adjacent words in context, the phonological restoration of the underlying pausal forms of words from the continuous reading is no mere mechanical operation, but presupposes a grammatical and semantic analysis of the text.

The *Nighaṇṭu* is a collection of difficult Vedic words probably made likewise in the late Vedic period. The *Nighaṇṭu* and the commentary upon this collection by Yāska in his *Nirukta* provide early lexical and etymological approaches to the R̥gveda, though understanding "etymology" in a synchronic, rather than our current diachronic sense.

Various indexes or anukramaṇīs to the Ṛgveda, also mentioned above, were compiled probably around the middle of the first millennium BCE, attributed to Śaunaka; these were not fully preserved. A comprehensive index, the Sarvānukramaṇī, attributed to Kātyāyana and dating perhaps to the mid-fourth century BCE but drawing on the earlier indexes, provides, for each hymn, the poet, the god(s) to which it is addressed, and the meter(s) in which it is composed. The Bṛhaddevatā, also attributed to Śaunaka, is in essence also an anukramaṇī, specifically an index to the deities of each hymn, but in expanded form, with a number of interesting narratives and legends interspersed in the dry sequential listing of hymns and their divinities.

None of these ancient tools and treatments remotely approaches the standard type of commentary familiar for later Sanskrit texts. For this the Ṛgveda had to wait until the medieval period. The most influential and lasting commentary on the text was made by Sāyaṇa in the fourteenth century CE in South India, although there were a number of pre-Sāyaṇa commentators, some of whose work survives in part. Sāyaṇa's work essentially superseded these earlier works, and remains enormously important in both indigenous and Western interpretations of the text: Max Müller's edition of the Ṛgveda includes Sāyaṇa's commentary, and Geldner's translation, for example, owes much to Sāyaṇa. It should be remembered, however, that Sāyaṇa is temporally closer to our own age than to that of the Ṛgveda, and he was writing in a very different geographical, political, and religious landscape from that of the Ṛgveda. It is therefore more useful to read Sāyaṇa not as a direct conduit of the "true meaning" of the Ṛgveda but as a scholar grappling with the same problems as modern interpreters, and bringing to bear all the intelligence and knowledge he can muster, just as we do.

D. WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP ON THE ṚGVEDA AND MAJOR RESOURCES

Because the transmission of the Ṛgveda has preserved the text remarkably well, we have a trustworthy and uniform text of the Ṛgveda. The published editions of the Ṛgveda differ in their presentation of the text, not in the text itself. The landmark edition of the Ṛgveda was that of Max Müller (1849–74), who published both the Saṃhitā and Padapāṭha text in devanāgarī script, together with Sāyaṇa's commentary. Before the completion of Müller's Ṛgveda, in 1861–63 Theodor Aufrecht published the text in Roman transliteration, together with selected Padapāṭha analyses. A second edition, the standard edition of Aufrecht's Ṛgveda, appeared in 1877. The Ṛgveda and Sāyaṇa's commentary were published again under the editorship of N. S. Sontakke (1933–51), together with the Padapāṭha. Also noteworthy is the aforementioned publication of the metrically restored version of the Ṛgveda text by Barend A. van Nooten and Gary B. Holland (1994).

The uniformity and reliability of the text of the Ṛgveda cannot be said of its translations, which vary considerably. The standard scholarly translation remains that of Karl Friedrich Geldner into German. This translation was published in full

in 1951, but was complete in the 1920s and partially published in limited fashion then. Although it remains a remarkable philological accomplishment, whose worth we two translators have appreciated more and more over the years, it of course could not take account of the advances in Vedic scholarship over the last eighty years or so. Louis Renou (1955–69) was able to finish most of a French translation of the Ṛgveda, in a series of thematic publications, under the general title *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, organized by the divinity addressed rather than the order of the Ṛgvedic text. But he left undone substantial parts, notably the Indra and Aśvin hymns, and the later publications are rather sketchy. T. Ya. Elizarenkova (1989–99) completed a Russian translation of the text. Currently in preparation is a new German translation of the Ṛgveda under the direction of Michael Witzel and Toshifumi Gotō. The first volume of the Witzel-Gotō translation (2007), which covers Maṇḍalas I and II, has appeared, with the second volume scheduled for 2013.

Unfortunately, English has not been as well served as these other languages. Aside from anthologies, the English version that is in general use is R. T. H. Griffith's translation, which was first published in four volumes between 1889 and 1892, then in a revised edition in 1896, and then yet again in another revised edition, this time by J. L. Shastri, in 1973. Griffith's translation has been reprinted several times since 1973 and is available online (http://www.sacred- texts.com/hin/rigveda/index.htm). Sadly, this translation really does not deserve as many rebirths as it has had. Its philology was already dated when it was published, and the English style of the translation is cloying and almost unreadable. Now, well over a century later, it should have long since been superseded. There was at least one serious effort to do so. From the late 1940s until the early 1960s, H. D. Velankar steadily published English translations of the Ṛgveda, which were a decided improvement over Griffith's work (for a list of his translations, see the Bibliography). These were published as independent volumes dedicated to books II, V, VII, and VIII of the Ṛgveda and as collections of hymns to different deities published in the *Journal of the University of Bombay*. Partly because these translations are scattered, incomplete, and difficult of access, they have received less attention than they might otherwise have done. In addition to these complete or extensive translations of the Ṛgveda, several anthologies of Ṛgvedic hymns have appeared. In English, the most notable are those of Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (1981) and Walter H. Maurer (1986). The principal problem with any such anthology is that translators understandably choose hymns that they think will be especially interesting for their readers and accessible to them. As a result, they tend to create a distorted view of the Ṛgveda that does not reflect the liturgical functions and scope of the text.

Both the partial and the complete translations just mentioned were fundamental for the present translation. In our introductions to individual hymns, we will often make reference to them, especially when they suggest interpretations of the text we deem particularly worthy of note. Rather than giving a fuller bibliographic reference, we will refer to them only by the last names of the translators. The exceptions are Renou's translations, for which we will give the relevant volume and page of his

Études védiques et pāṇinéenes, and Velankar's translations, where again we will cite the specific source.

In addition to these translations, there are a number of other essential resources for translating and interpreting the R̥gveda. Among the older works of particular significance are the *Wörterbuch* of Hermann Grassmann (1872–75), whose presentation of the lexicon of the R̥gveda is somewhat antique but still very useful. Grassmann's work has now been complemented and in some respects superseded by Alexander Lubotsky's concordance to the R̥gveda (1997), which provides the verse-line context for R̥gvedic words. Among older works of significance, of particular note is Hermann Oldenberg's *Noten* (1909, 1912) on the complete text of the R̥gveda, whose insights remain remarkable even a century after they were published. Maurice Bloomfield's *Rig-veda Repetitions* (1916) is an invaluable resource for the study of R̥gvedic formulaic language and its variations, though it predates the discovery of oral-formulaic composition.

In the last fifty years or so, R̥gvedic scholarship has blossomed with studies that have significantly advanced our understanding of the language of the R̥gveda—its lexicon, morphology, and syntax—of its compositional techniques, and of its conceptual universe and ritual procedures and context. We cannot offer even a partial list of such books, let alone articles, since we would omit too many. We will mention only a few, those which were especially close at hand as we worked through the text and whose insights we have often adopted. Particularly important was Manfred Mayrhofer's etymological dictionary of Old Indo-Aryan (*EWA* 1986–2001) and his previous version (*KEWA* 1951–76), not completely superseded by the newer one. Other works include Salvatore Scarlata's study of nominal compounds ending in roots (1999) and Jared S. Klein's studies of Vedic particles and discourse structure (1985). One of the subjects in which there has been substantial progress just in the last decades has been the Vedic verbal system. The flood of monographs on the verbal system probably began with Johanna Narten's work on the s-aorist (1964), followed closely by Karl Hoffmann's influential study of the injunctive (1967). Other verbal subsystems treated more recently include the -áya-stems (Jamison 1983), the first-class presents (Gotō 1987), the intensive (Schaefer 1994), the perfect (Kümmel 2000), the desiderative (Heenen 2006), and the ya-presents (Kulikov 2012). All of these works, as well as many other and many shorter studies, have been of critical importance as we have worked our way through the text.

Finally, we wish to note one last development not just in R̥gvedic but in Sanskrit scholarship more generally. Among older scholars there was a tendency to deal with difficulties in a text by emending it. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, scholars increasingly recognized that they could gain a much better understanding of the text by accepting the text as transmitted. This process is visible in Oldenberg's scholarship. Before the *Noten*, Oldenberg published translations of the Agni hymns of the first five books of the R̥gveda (1897). There he was willing to suggest text emendations to smooth rough spots in the hymns. By the time of the *Noten*, however, he had become much more apt to accept the text as it stands and

to explore ways of accounting for that transmitted text. We too are committed to accepting the traditional text and more importantly to allowing the poetry of the R̥gveda to remain complex, elusive, jagged, unsettled, and even unsettling.

III. Power of the Word

A. WORDS, TRUTH, AND KNOWLEDGE

One reason for the intricacy of R̥gvedic poetry and the careful thought that the R̥gvedic poets put into it is the importance that Vedic culture attached to the spoken word and to the truth that it embodied. The elegantly formulated truth, spoken in a ritual context, was powerful. The word for "truth" is *r̥tá*, a crucially resonant word that, with some reason, some other translators have rendered "order" or "cosmic order." The term *r̥tá* essentially defines what a being or object is and what it does, and it structures the relationships of beings and objects with other beings and objects. By speaking these truths of essence and relationship, the poets could make the truths real and actual in the present. So, for example, the great Indra hymn, I.32, begins, "Now I shall proclaim the heroic deeds of Indra, those foremost deeds, which the mace-wielder performed. . . ." Why does the poet proclaim these deeds? It is not simply to honor the god, although his proclamation surely does do that. It is also to state the *truth* of these heroic deeds, so that these deeds will become real once again. As Indra once before smashed Vr̥tra, who was the symbol and epitome of all obstacles, so once again he will smash obstacles. Formulating the "truth" of Indra is part of what makes Indra real and present. Similarly, the story of Indra and the Vala cave is essentially a story of the power of the truth. According to this myth, Indra and the Aṅgirases opened the Vala cave and released the cattle and the dawns by the songs they recited. These songs were powerful because they contained the truth that the cattle were the dawns, and therefore, by singing this truth Indra and the Aṅgirases obtained both cattle and dawns. In X.108 the poet narrates part of the story of Indra and Vala and then states his expectation that the truth of his song, which is the truth of the Vala story, will bring cattle back to him: "Exchanging with the truth, let the cows come up, which Br̥haspati [=Indra] found hidden. . . ." Or again, in IX.113.2 the poet declares the soma is pressed "with real words of truth, with trust, and with fervor." That is to say, it is not just the physical pressing of the soma plant that produces soma juice. Soma is also created by the intensity of the priests, by their confidence in the effectiveness of their actions, and by the truth they speak about the soma and about the power of the soma to strengthen the gods and to give life to mortals. Words, commitment, and ritual all combine to make the soma real.

The product of the formulating of a truth, the verbal formulation itself, is the *bráhman*, and the poet who formulates truth is the *brahmán*. While the later ritual tradition will rely on ancient formulations of the truth passed down from the early

Vedic period, the contemporary religious system of the Ṛgveda required ever-new formulations of the truth. These new formulations would attract the gods and make them present at the ritual, and these new formulations would make the truth they expressed newly real. For this reason the work of the poet was essential, for only poets could continue to produce these new formulations. The poet needed to be a master of many skills, but of all the skills he needed, the one that was most essential was knowledge. The truths that the poets formulated were often hidden truths, founded on enigma and paradox. One such kind of truth was homological truth that connected objects across spheres, which will be discussed in the next section.

The importance of knowledge for the Vedic poets is underscored by the variety of words for the poets' thinking and its articulation in the hymns. The poets speak of their *dhī́* or *dhītí* "insight" or "vision," *matí* or *mánman* "thought," and *manīṣā́* "inspired thinking." The hymn and the understanding that gives rise to it are so closely related that the boundary between them becomes permeable, and the poets use words for thinking and knowing for the hymns themselves. In I.2.7, for example, the poet calls on Mitra and Varuṇa "who bring success to our ghee-covered insight (*dhíyaṃ ghṛtā́cīm*)," that is, to the hymn that is accompanied by offerings of ghee, or again, in VI.8.1 the poet offers Agni Vaiśvānara a "newer thought" (*matír návyasī*), which purifies itself (*pavate*) in the poet's mind and emerges in his speech.

B. HOMOLOGY

The Vedic mental universe is structured, in great part, by a web of identifications or equivalences among elements in the ritual realm, in the cosmic realm, and in the realm of the everyday. These homologies play an enormous role in the thought of the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, where knowing the hidden connections between apparently disparate elements, particularly the equivalences between cosmic and ritual elements, gives the knower some power to control the cosmic by manipulation of the ritual. In these later Vedic texts, such types of equivalences have a technical name—*bandhu* "bond, connection" (a word of course cognate with English "bind," etc.)—and the difference between the cosmic and the mundane system of equations is pervasive enough to be distinguished by technical terms: the cosmic level is called *adhidaivam* or *adhidevatam*, roughly "concerned with the divine," while the mundane is called *adhyātmam*, roughly "concerned with the person(al)." These two systems meet in and focus on the sacrifice, a controlled and orderly sphere of human activity, as a way of modeling the complex web of relationships that obtain in the two other realms, which are not under human control. The level of the sacrifice is called *adhiyajñam* "relating to the sacrifice."

Although the correspondences are not as systematically worked out and presented in the Ṛgveda as in those later texts, this way of thinking is just as pervasive in that text, though backgrounded: the poets assume that they share with their audience a web of associations, and this shared knowledge allows the poet to substitute one element for another without overt signaling. Thus, for example, the first

rays of light at dawn are homologized to cows, as in the Vala myth discussed above, and therefore the goddess Dawn is called "the mother of cows" and images of ruddy cows overrun the hymns to Dawn. Cows also have a ritual association: milk is mixed with the soma juice after it is pressed, and so the soma hymns are filled with depictions of the soma (as bull) running toward or mixing with "the cows," that is, the milk. And cows are also homologized to waters, particularly the waters confined by Vr̥tra and released by Indra's killing of that demon.

Modern readers of the R̥gveda must try to internalize the many associations and identifications that formed the unconscious mental universe of the contemporary audience; otherwise almost every hymn in many of its parts will seem unintelligible or nonsensical. Other important homologies include that between the sun and the fire, especially the ritual fire, and, in general, the many associations between the various parts and procedures of the ritual and both cosmic and everyday elements. For example, the ritual itself, or the praise hymn specifically, is often identified with a chariot, and the crafting of poetry is homologized to chariot-making. Soma is often identified with a bull, but often otherwise with a horse, and the ritual preparation of the soma is equated with the grooming of this horse. Or he is a bird settling into his nest or a king embarking on conquest. The ritual ground itself is often identified with the cosmos, with the ritual fire a pillar connecting heaven and earth and any movement on the ritual ground implicitly compared to a vast journey across or around the cosmos. It is not possible here to list anything approaching all the important connections that underlie R̥gvedic poetry, though we will try to sketch many such associations in particular circumstances. But the reader must be alert to, and open to, this overall substitution principle, and also recognize that these homologies are not mere poetic embellishments, imagery for its own sake, but an implicit statement about the way things *really are*, the pervasive underlying connections unifying apparently disparate elements.

It is one of the poet's main jobs to find and articulate these hidden connections, and the theme of "secret names" and their discovery is an important one in the R̥gveda. Indeed, one of the great deeds attributed to Indra (as Br̥haspati) and to the poet-singers, the Aṅgirases, divine counterparts of the human poet—the splitting of the Vala cave and the release of the cows imprisoned therein—turns in some versions on discovering the cows' hidden names (e.g., IV.1.16, X.68.7). The training of a poet clearly involved both producing and solving quite recherché associations, and the genre of riddle displays these skills to great advantage.

C. THE WORDSMITHS

A number of different words are used to identify the workers in words, for which we use the cover term "poet." These different terms often in fact have the same referent, sometimes in the very same passage, but emphasize different aspects of verbal craftsmanship. The most important terms are *brahmán, kaví, ŕ̥ṣi*, and *vípra*. Although it is not always possible to draw fine distinctions among these words, and

there remains considerable disagreement about their application (we two translators, for example, are not entirely agreed on the function of the *kaví*), the words do point to different types of relationships between the poet and his product and its source. As noted above, the *brahmán* is the "formulator," who discerns and puts into words the hidden truths that undergird reality. His product is a *bráhman*, a "sacred formulation." The term *ŕ̥ṣi*, generally rendered here as "seer," is especially applied to the famous seers of the past, single or as a group, and to current poets who consciously aspire to the status of their predecessors, and like other words for verbal craftsmen, it is also regularly used of gods, especially Agni and Soma. The *vípra*, a derivative of the root √*vip* "tremble," appears to be an "inspired poet" and contrasts with the *kaví*, the poet par excellence, but also the "sage poet," endowed with the knowledge embodied in poetic skill (*kā́vya*). The original sense of the word *kaví* and the function of the person so named is disputed; it has well-attested Iranian cognates, starting with Avestan *kauui*, whose sense diverges from its Vedic correspondent. We two translators have discussed these issues in separate treatments (Brereton 2004; Jamison 2007: chap. 4).

There are a few less well-attested terms, such as *kārú* here rendered "bard" or "praise-poet," the transparent agent noun *stotár* "praiser," as well as designations that seem more related to performance, such as *jaritár* "singer," *vāghát* "cantor" or "chanter," *rebhá* "husky-/raspy-voiced (singer)."

IV. Ritual

There have been a variety of approaches to the R̥gveda, by both ancient and modern scholars. Following the lead of the Br̥haddevatā, some interpreters have been concerned primarily with the myths and legends of the R̥gveda. Others have sought to understand the deities of the R̥gveda by exploring the meaning and derivation of their names. And as early as the later Vedic period, still others understood the R̥gvedic deities as the powers of the natural world or as symbols of microcosmic processes. But the R̥gveda is first of all a liturgical text. The great majority of its hymns were composed for rituals and, more specifically, for the soma rituals of their period. After the collection of the R̥gveda, its verses were adapted to the recitations and chants of the classical soma ritual and employed in a variety of other ritual contexts. Understanding the R̥gveda, therefore, first requires understanding the Vedic rituals and, above all, the soma ritual.

A. MODEL OF THE RITUAL

The ritual as depicted both in the R̥gveda and in the later Vedic texts treating the classical śrauta system (and indeed the much later *pūjā* of classical Hinduism) is modeled as a hospitality ceremony and festive meal, offered to the visiting gods. The poets eagerly invite the gods to journey to attend the sacrifice. When they arrive,

they are greeted and provided with seats near the center of the action, on a special grass strewn on the ritual ground to make the ground more comfortable. This grass strew is called *barhís* and it has an exact cognate in Avestan *barziš* "cushion, pillow." In some hymns the horses pulling the gods' chariots, particularly Indra's two fallow bays, are unhitched and offered refreshment of their own. The gods are then offered a meal, that is, the oblations, generally consisting of ghee, little grain cakes, and, in the most important sacrifices, soma, and they are entertained while they eat, by the hymns of praise that constitute the R̥gvedic corpus. The end of this entertainment is often announced in the final verse of the hymn, and sometimes the gods are explicitly sent on their way back to heaven. Particularly nice examples of this envoi are found in I.61–63 and I.82, hymns designed to accompany the Hāriyojana or "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation, the ritualized hitching up of Indra's horses for the return journey; in I.82.5–6 Indra is charmingly urged to go home to his "dear wife."

The "ritual ground" alluded to above is the sacralized space within which the ritual proceeds. It is not a permanent space dedicated to ritual performance, much less a building or temple; rather, judging from the evidence of the later śrauta texts, it is demarcated and sacralized for each performance. The space is defined especially by the presence of three ritual fires, the focal point of the sacrifice and the recipient(s) of the oblations. In the later texts these are the *Āhavanīya* (the fire "to be offered into") set to the east, the *Gārhapatya* ("householders' fire") to the west, from which the Āhavanīya is taken out and carried to the east, and the *Dakṣiṇāgni* ("southern fire"), and their locations and functions are precisely fixed. The R̥gveda does not attest these names for the fires, but it does often refer, though often obliquely, to the three fires of the ritual. Moreover, the god Agni and his physical representative, the offering fire, regularly receive the epithet *puróhita* "placed to the east/in front," appropriate to the removal of the Āhavanīya fire from the western Gārhapatya and its movement to the east. (The third word in the R̥gveda is in fact *puróhitam* I.1.1.) The poets sometimes seem to treat this movement as a sacred mystery (e.g., III.31.1–3), a fact that may point to the three-fire model as a ritual innovation of the pre-R̥gvedic period. There is no parallel to it in Avestan ritual, which uses only a single fire.

One aspect of the "entertainment of guests" model of Vedic sacrifice is the fear, constantly expressed, that the gods will choose to go to another party. The R̥gvedic sacrificers know that everyone in the larger sacrificial community follows much the same ritual calendar and therefore many competing sacrifices are taking place at the same time. The invitation to the gods often explicitly urges them to pass over other sacrifices and come to *ours*, and in order to make ours more attractive, we must provide the best hospitality, in particular the best entertainment in the form of exquisitely crafted and novel hymns.

An important feature of the "guest" model is the fact that it envisions and requires direct interaction between gods and mortals, on the mortals' turf—or rather on a space that has been rendered temporarily neutral through its sacralization—though it is on earth, the human realm, rather than in the gods' world,

heaven. The interaction in turn requires epiphany in the technical sense: the gods must appear in person, as it were. The poets crave this epiphany and fear its failure to materialize. It is especially Indra whose epiphany they anticipate, and the fear that it may not happen also leads to the more general fear that Indra does not exist, a possibility that is often put in the mouth of doubtful "others."

There is another, more recessive model of sacrifice perceptible in the R̥gveda, especially in Agni hymns, whereby the offerings go to the gods in heaven, rather than requiring the gods to come to earth to receive them. The libations ascend on the smoke of the offering fire, an image conceptually close to the Homeric sacrifice. There seems to be no conflict in the minds of the R̥gvedic ritualists between these two models, and they are not exclusive to different groups of poets but can in fact occur in the same hymn; see, for example, the Agni hymn I.1, where the "guest" model dominates, with the gods' travel to the sacrifice explicit in verses 2 and 5, but the oblation's movement *to* the gods is alluded to in verse 4.

B. BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE RITUAL

Later Vedic texts give detailed descriptions of the soma rituals, which varied in length and complexity. The problem for the interpretation of the R̥gveda is that these classical rites were clearly not the same as the rites of the R̥gvedic period itself. While the classical rites drew on R̥gvedic traditions, they did not simply continue them. In the R̥gvedic period these rituals were probably much more variable, for even though their rituals were based on a shared inherited tradition, different priestly families performed the rites differently. For example, in the classical one-day soma rite, soma juice is pressed out of the soma plant and offered to various deities in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. But the third or evening pressing stands apart from the other two. While soma plants are freshly pressed in the morning and at midday, in the evening the soma is extracted from the already-mangled soma stems left over from the earlier pressings. Not only the soma preparation but also the overall character of the Third Pressing is different. It has a greater focus on the sacrificer and his wife, the gods of the Third Pressing form a less coherent group than those of the other pressings, and in general, the rites of the Third Pressing have the appearance of an appendix. It is possible that some family traditions did not have a Third Pressing and that, among those that did, the form of the Third Pressing was more fluid. Or again, in the Midday Pressing of the classical soma ritual, there are offerings to Indra alone and to Indra along with the Maruts. This form may represent a compromise between family traditions that offered soma only to Indra at this second pressing and those that also included the Maruts.

Variation in the rite also occurred over time. The R̥gvedic period itself extended through several generations of poets and priests, and the rites evolved during this period. In the classical soma ritual the sacrificer must be accompanied by his wife, who has her own ritual responsibilities (see Jamison 1996a). But in the R̥gveda, the wife of the sacrificer is very rarely alluded to and then almost exclusively in

the younger parts of the text. Therefore the wife of the sacrificer may have been a late addition to the soma ritual, and indeed the Ṛgveda even offers evidence that her introduction may have been controversial, with some ritualists defending and others rejecting her presence in the rite (see Jamison 2011, forthcoming a, and forthcoming b). Ultimately, those who wished to include the sacrificer's wife won the day, for in the classical soma ritual her presence is required even if her ritual functions are limited.

The consolidation of the ritual tradition and the creation of the classical forms of the soma rite probably occurred after 1000 BCE, during the period in which the other saṃhitās were compiled. The innovations effected by this consolidation not only changed the form of the ritual, but also altered its very nature. Fundamental to the Ṛgvedic rite was the need for poets to create new formulations of the truth in order to attract the attention of the gods, to make them present at the rite, and to define their action. But in the later Vedic period, not only did the ritual offerings become increasingly standardized, so also did the ritual recitations and chants. Novelty and innovation were no longer primary values, but instead were supplanted by the ability to remember the old compositions. The compilation of the Ṛgveda reflects the need to preserve the poetry of the past in order to employ it within the ritual, for in the later Veda power resided not in the new formulation but in the ancient one. Or rather and more generally, power was understood as residing in the ritual performance as a whole and with the priests who carried out the rite. In later Vedic interpretation the ritual even came to exercise power over the gods themselves. The ritual became less an invitation to the gods and more a manipulation of them. One marker of this shift was the rise in the later Veda of Prajāpati, the Lord of Creatures. Prajāpati was the sacrifice itself, and his superiority to the other gods therefore symbolized the dominance of the sacrifice over the gods. Knowledge remained important: priests should understand the secrets of the rite that they performed. But the knowledge and skills of a poet did not have a place in the evolving ritual order.

Given the fluidity of the rites during the Ṛgvedic era, we cannot really speak of *the* Ṛgvedic soma rite, even though there were certainly common characteristics of the soma rituals performed throughout the period. Moreover, given the changes that occurred after the Ṛgvedic era, we cannot simply project the classical soma rites back into the Ṛgveda. While many technical ritual terms and elements were passed down from the Ṛgvedic period to the classical rites, these terms may not have had the same significance for the Ṛgveda that they do for the classical tradition. This is perhaps most obviously the case for the brahmán. In the later ritual the brahmán became the formal overseer of the ritual. In the Ṛgveda he was rather the poet who formulates the truth (further see Brereton 2004).

We have already noted that fire is at the center of the Vedic rites and that the three fires of the classical śrauta ritual model were likely present in the Ṛgvedic ritual. It is clear that already in the Ṛgveda the principal offerings were made into the fire, and the gods received them through this mediating force. It is no wonder,

then, that the first hymn of the R̥gveda is a hymn to Agni, the god of fire, since his appearance ritually marked the beginning of the sacrifice, nor that Agni is the recipient of more hymns than any god but Indra.

Sacrifices were carried out by men performing a variety of priestly functions. In II.1.2 and II.5.1–8 Gr̥tsamada poets provide a list of seven priests, to which the *Gr̥hapati* "houselord," who is the primary beneficiary of the rite, is added as an eighth. Although the correspondence is not precise, Oldenberg (1917: 385) compares this list to a list of eight priests in the Avesta and argues that it reflects an old tradition that was still alive in the R̥gveda. In II.1.2 these seven priests are the *Hotar, Potar, Neṣṭar, Agnīdh, Adhvaryu, Praśāstar*, and *Brahman*. As Minkowski (1991: 113) points out, these seven essentially correspond to the classical list of priests in the *R̥tuyāja*s, the "sacrifices in turn" (which adds the Acchāvāka priest) and in the *R̥tvigvaraṇa*, the "choosing of priests," and to the priests who recite at the *Prasthitahoma*s, the "presented oblations." It is likely, therefore, that the list of seven does rest on a well-established tradition.

The Hotar was the principal priest, and the R̥gveda repeatedly mentions the "seven Hotars" (VIII.60.16; IX.10.7, 114.3; X.35.10, 61.1, 63.7) or the seven *hótrāḥ* "priestly functions" (X.17.11), by which it probably refers to the group of seven priests led by the Hotar. Although in the R̥gveda and in the later tradition, the Hotar is the priest who recites the hymns and is secondarily associated with the root √*hū* "call," his name originally meant the "pourer" (derived from the root √*hu* "pour"), which indicates that his ancient function was both to pour the offerings and to recite. In the R̥gveda he was likely often the composer of the hymns he recited as well. He is the one priest who has an exact correspondent in the Avestan tradition, the Zaotar, who already in the Gāthās of Zarathustra also composed and recited hymns.

On the basis of the likely analysis of his name, the Potar was the "purifier," likely a purifier of the soma (cf. TB I.4.8), but his R̥gvedic function is unclear. In the classical soma rite, the Neṣṭar, the "leader," is associated with the wives of the gods and the wife of the sacrificer. Judging from passages like IV.9.4, in the R̥gveda he had a connection with the former, which may have expanded to the latter with the introduction of the sacrificer's wife into the ritual. In the later tradition the Agnīdh or "fire-kindler" laid and tended the sacrificial fire, in addition to kindling it. He also acted as the primary assistant to the Adhvaryu, the "ceremoniant," the priest principally in charge of the ritual acts of the sacrifice. According to II.5.4 the Praśāstar, "director," is the priest who knows the "enduring commandments" (*dhruvā́ vratā́ni*) that govern the rite. He was likely the forerunner of the *Maitrāvaruṇa* priest of the later tradition, who gives the *praiṣa* or "command" for a particular ritual act to take place (Minkowski 1991: 118). And finally, there is the Brahman. According to Oldenberg (1917: 396), the Brahman in this list corresponded to the later *Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin*, an assistant to the Hotar who recited hymns in honor of Indra. Oldenberg may be right, but the Brahman in II.1.2 may have been the *brahmán* elsewhere in the R̥gveda, a composer and reciter of hymns. His liturgical functions

were probably not so restricted as those of the Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin. Other passages contain partial lists of priests and mention priests who are not included among the seven of II.1.2, although for the most part their functions overlap those already described. One remarkable omission from the above lists of priests is a priestly title corresponding to the singers of the Sāmaveda. Nonetheless, there were singers at the R̥gvedic period, since especially those hymns composed in pragātha meters were likely chanted rather than recited. The Udgātar, later the principal priest of the Sāmavedic tradition, is mentioned as a singer of sāmans in II.34.2, and among those priests already mentioned the Potar may have chanted the Soma Pavamāna hymns of book IX. Also, it is possible that unlike the later tradition, in which singers were distinguished from reciters, R̥gvedic priests both chanted and recited according the requirements of the ritual.

A number of other terms describe the ritual participants and priests and their functions in the rites. While the exact role of the R̥gvedic *kaví* continues to be debated, he was linked to the production of poetry and to the mastery of esoteric knowledge expressed in his words. Our usual translation of *kaví* as "sage poet" attempts to capture these two sides of him. Since it has an Avestan cognate *kauui*, the term is an old one, and both the roles of the *kaví* and the *kauui* undoubtedly went through many changes in their long histories. Originally, however, the *kaví/kauui* may have had specific ritual functions within the forerunners of the Avestan and Vedic rites. Those functions may have complemented those of another figure, the *uśíj*, a term that also has an Avestan cognate, *usig*. Although anciently the *uśíj/usig* may have been a specific priestly office, the R̥gveda uses the term *uśíj* to describe various priests who tend the ritual fire. To give the sense of *uśíj* as a technical term for such a category of priests, we have translated it as "fire-priest." So then, likely reflecting a very ancient distribution of roles, the *uśíj* priests were masters of ritual action, while the *kaví* was the master of words and knowledge.

Thus, like other aspects of the R̥gvedic rites, the R̥gvedic priesthood was not fixed. For the R̥gveda we can better understand the names of priests as describing priestly functions rather than naming professional ritual specialists. Thinking of them in this way helps us understand why hymns use different names or vary the names. In a period before the rise of the priestly śākhās, there was less need for priests to have a determined or single identity. The same people who acted as priests in the ritual could be warriors or perform other social roles in other contexts.

C. SOMA RITUAL

As we have frequently had occasion to remark, most of the hymns of the R̥gveda were composed for the soma ritual. The central rite of this sacrifice was the preparation of the soma juice, which was then offered to the gods and shared among male participants in the rite. In the R̥gvedic period the stalks of the soma plant were probably placed on a stone and crushed using another stone or stones. The extracted juice was either transferred to a vessel that contained water and then

poured through or onto a woolen filter to purify it. In either case the soma then ran into another vessel, in which it was mixed with milk. In the Agniṣṭoma of the classical tradition, there are three soma-pressings in a single day, although, as remarked above, this may not have been true for the whole R̥gvedic period or for all ritual traditions during the R̥gvedic period. The R̥gveda also knows the Atirātra or "overnight" form of the soma ritual, in which there are still three pressings on one day, but in which the rite continues across the night. The final offerings of the Atirātra are then made on the morning of the second day.

One of the perennial problems in R̥gvedic and Avestan studies has been the identity of the soma plant or its Iranian equivalent, the haoma plant. In the R̥gveda the effect of soma juice on both humans and gods is described by the verbal root √*mad*, roughly "exhilarate" or "elate." By these translations we mean that the soma juice invigorated those who drank it and heightened their senses in some fashion. We could be more precise about the effect of soma if we knew from what plant it was extracted. Early speculation that the soma juice was an alcoholic drink of some sort clearly missed the mark, since the preparation of soma does not allow for fermentation and √*mad* does not mean "intoxicate," if that implies drunkenness and not transport. Of the substantial number of possibilities proposed in more recent times, two have dominated the discussion. (For a review of the various theories, at least of the time of its writing, see Houben 2003.) The first is that the soma plant was a stimulant, and the most frequent candidate for that stimulant is one or another kind of ephedra. Although not original to him and defended by other scholars, the interpretation of soma as ephedra was argued with particular plausibility by Harry Falk (1989), largely on the basis of internal evidence in the R̥gveda. Also in favor of this hypothesis are the use of ephedra in Zoroastrian ritual even in modern times and the discovery of traces of ephedra at various sites of the ancient Bactrian-Margiana Archaeological Complex, a culture with apparent connections with Indo-Iranian culture. Neither of these discoveries confirms the ephedra hypothesis, and there have been and continue to be many critics of it. Another set of proposals envisions the soma as a hallucinogen. This argument was most famously put forth by Wasson (1968), who identified the soma plant as the *Amanita muscaria*, the fly agaric mushroom. Similarly Flattery and Schwartz (1989) argued that previous attempts to identify the soma/haoma plant had overvalued the Vedic evidence and undervalued the Iranian. On the basis of the latter evidence, their candidate for the soma plant was *Peganum harmala*, mountain rue, which also has psychoactive properties. Despite Flattery and Schwartz's admonitions, recent defenders of the view that soma was a hallucinogen have continued to focus on the internal evidence of the R̥gveda. For them √*mad* implies not so much stimulation as ecstasy or visionary experience. Stuhrman (2006), for example, cites the hymns' light imagery and the unexpected associations made by the poets to argue that these are best explained as reflexes of hallucinogenic experience.

This is not an issue that we can resolve, and we would leave it aside if we could. But the identification of soma affects the interpretation of some hymns and

particularly the translation of the various forms of the root √*mad*. In general, we find more textual evidence to support the interpretation of the soma juice as a stimulant than as a hallucinogen. Neither the imagery of the poems nor the vision of the poets requires a hallucinogen to explain them. Our view of the hymns is that they are careful, often intricate compositions that attest to the skill and imagination of the poets. There is no need to assume the poets experienced the effects of a hallucinogen, and some reason not to do so. To explain what is bizarre and obscure in these hymns by pharmacology can inhibit the effort to see the underlying logic and intention of the hymns. While there is much that remains obscure in the R̥gveda, interpreters of the text have been able to make progress by the simple assumption that the hymns do make sense and that the poets did know exactly what they were doing.

D. OTHER RITUALS

In describing Vedic ritual we have thus far been discussing the soma sacrifice. But while the soma sacrifice dominates the R̥gveda, the collection includes hymns composed for other rites as well. One of the sub-rites of the classical soma ritual is the Pravargya, which according to most ritual sūtras is performed twice daily on the three days leading up to the soma-pressing day. At an earlier stage, likely represented by the R̥gveda, the Pravargya was an independent rite, which was only later incorporated into the soma tradition. Although the Pravargya is not mentioned by name in R̥gveda, the text refers to the rite at the center of the Pravargya, an offering to the Aśvins of *gharmá*, a mixture of hot milk and ghee, and the underlying verbal lexeme *prá* √*vr̥j* is used in ritual context.

A number of other hymns, especially in book X, also refer to a Rājasūya, a royal consecration rite, and other rites defining and affirming royal sovereignty. The central rite in the classical Rājasūya was the royal unction, in which water was poured on the king. This water conferred on the king royal power and authority. Again, the unction rite itself is not mentioned, but the symbolism of water as a substance that confers power on the king and over which a successful king must exercise power is very much part of the R̥gvedic tradition. While R̥gvedic kingship may have differed significantly from later kingship, other classical symbols of kingship also appear in the R̥gveda, such as the association of the king and the sun (cf. X.121) and the identification of king with Varuṇa and Indra, who represent two kinds of sovereignty (cf. IV.42).

The animal sacrifice, either as an independent rite or as a part of the soma sacrifice, is not very prominent in the R̥gveda and is generally alluded to by its paraphernalia, actions, and verbal accompaniment rather than treated directly. The most salient piece of equipment is the *yūpa*, the post to which the sacrificial animal is tied. The yūpa is celebrated in a single hymn, III.8, which is actually a composite of two parallel hymns, one appropriate to a single post for a single sacrificial animal,

one to multiple posts for several victims. The hymn concerns only the preparation of the posts; there is no mention of the sacrificial victim(s).

One of the most dramatic actions in the later animal sacrifice is the threefold circumambulation of the victim by a priest, the Āgnīdhra, carrying a firebrand. When in some R̥gvedic hymns the ritual Agni is said to "go around," the reference seems to be to this circumambulation—though again the victim is mentioned barely or not at all (see esp. IX.92.6, 97.1, where soma's circling of the filter is compared to the Hotar's circling of "the fixed seats provided with [sacrificial] beasts"; see also I.173.3, VII.18.22, X.22.14). Elsewhere (VI.1.3, V.43.7) the first and most highly prized part of the sacrificial beast to be ritually offered in later śrauta ritual, the omentum, is alluded to, again without direct mention of the sacrificing of the animal.

The most significant representation of the animal sacrifice in the R̥gveda, albeit again indirect, is found in the litanies known as the Āprī hymns. In the later ritual the Āprī litany accompanied the fore-offerings of the animal sacrifice. The R̥gveda contains ten such hymns; in them a set series of subjects or key words—ritual personnel (e.g., Tvaṣṭar), qualities (e.g., "well kindled"), or equipment (e.g., ritual grass)—are treated in a fixed order, though with variable wording, generally in eleven or twelve verses. One of the pieces of equipment is the yūpa, the wooden post mentioned above, though under the epithet "Lord of the Forest" (=tree). But the actual sacrifice of an animal is never mentioned in these hymns; at best the victim is delicately referred to as an oblation.

There is also indirect reference to the animal sacrifice in mythological allusion to the Śunaḥśepa story, in which the young brahmin boy so named is almost offered up as a sacrifice to the gods, though he is rescued at the last minute. Although the story is best known from the very full narrative in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.13–18), his dramatic release is alluded to in the R̥gveda quite explicitly (see esp. V.2.7, also I.24.12–13).

Perhaps the most extravagant and dramatic ritual in the classical śrauta system is the great royal sacrifice, the Aśvamedha or Horse Sacrifice, to be performed by a king to consolidate or display his power. It involves letting a stallion roam at will for a year, accompanied by armed troops who fight the sovereigns of any territory into which the horse strays. When the horse returns at the end of the year, it is sacrificed, along with numerous other victims, with due pomp but also with almost unimaginably outlandish accompanying actions. At the climax of the ritual the chief wife of the king has sex (or simulated sex) with the just-slaughtered horse on the ritual ground, while the other queens and their female attendants circle around, singing and dancing and trading obscene jokes with the officiating priests. Two late R̥gvedic hymns (I.162–163) directly treat the Horse Sacrifice, although the later sexual extravaganza is either unknown to them or, more likely, delicately omitted from discussion. The first (I.162) describes the (literally) gory details of the sacrifice itself, while commending the sacrificed horse and all its gear to the gods, while the second (I.163) lavishly lauds the horse and identifies it with the sun on its journey

to the gods. Moreover, if we are correct in our interpretation of X.86, the famous salacious three-way conversation among Indra, his wife Indrāṇī, and Indra's pal, the monkey Vṛṣākapi, this hymn is a burlesque or parody (though a serious one) of the Horse Sacrifice, with the monkey standing in for the horse-victim, Indrāṇī for the wife who must mate with the animal victim, and Indra for the king and sacrificer who stands by and watches this mating. This interpretation presupposes that the dramatic sexual aspect of the Aśvamedha was already present in the Ṛgvedic version of the rite and is simply not mentioned in I.162–163.

In addition to the rituals that will be codified in the later classical śrauta system, the Ṛgveda marginally treats rituals that will form part of the *gṛhya*, or "domestic," ritual system, primarily life-cycle rites. The Ṛgvedic treatments are almost exclusively found in late portions of the text, in Maṇḍala X, and often have parallels in the Atharvaveda. The funeral is treated in a series of hymns (X.14–18) in the Yama cycle. Of particular interest are X.16, which concerns the cremation fire and the actual burning of the dead man's body, and X.18, which describes the funeral service, the burial, and the return of those still living to their lives. Verses 7–9 of X.18 have attracted special attention because they appear to depict the widow of the dead man, first lying beside the dead man and then being recalled to life and to remarriage—thus suggesting that while the later institution of *satī* or widow burning is not attested in the Ṛgveda, the ritual representation of the widow's ceremonial death (though followed by ceremonial rebirth) could have provided a model for a more literal enactment. Many of the verses in this group of hymns are found also in the Atharvaveda funeral hymns, XVIII.1–4. Another hymn, X.56, describes the ascent of the body of the deceased by means of the cremation fire and its transformation into an immortal body in heaven (see Brereton forthcoming a).

A long and episodic hymn, X.85, is devoted to the wedding. Many of its verses are found also in the Atharvaveda wedding hymns and are utilized in the gṛhya sūtra protocols for the wedding ceremony. After a long mythological prologue, the hymn proceeds (sometimes in jumbled fashion) from the wooing of the bride-to-be to the journey of the newly married couple to the new home, with a very interesting (and barely comprehensible) treatment of the deflowering of the bride.

The Ṛgveda also provides a certain amount of evidence for the institution of the *Svayaṃvara* or bridal "self-choice" marriage, familiar to anyone who has ever studied first-year Sanskrit and read the Mahābhārata story of Nala and Damayantī, whose engagement took that form. Most of the Ṛgvedic evidence is mythological, as the archetypal divine bride in the text is Sūryā, daughter of the sun, who exercises her choice (see especially Jamison 2001), but there is also lexical evidence (see Jamison 2003) as well as incidental imagery, especially in Dawn hymns, of young girls in such a situation.

Pregnancy and birth, a major preoccupation in the later gṛhya material, is barely represented in the Ṛgveda. There is a charm for safe childbirth (X.184), which follows immediately on a brief dialogue between husband and wife attempting to conceive (X.183), and in a short series of hymns against disease we find one against the

dangers of miscarriage (X.162). Maṇḍala V also contains a charm for safe child-birth embedded in an Aśvin hymn (V.78.7–10) and motivated by the mythological case of (the male seers) Atri and Saptavadhri, trapped in tight quarters like a child in the womb.

V. The Gods

A. NATURE OF THE GODS

The great majority of R̥gvedic hymns are dedicated to individual gods or to groups of gods. Following a classification articulated already in I.139.11, Yāska (Nir. VII.5) divided the gods into three categories: gods of the earth, gods of the mid-space, and gods of heaven. This simple scheme has the advantage of being clear and the disadvantage of being misleading. For while the R̥gvedic pantheon includes deities who represent the visible realities and powers of the natural world, it is not fully composed of such gods. A better starting place for most of the gods is their names. As we shall see, the R̥gveda attaches great importance to the names of gods. By invoking, varying, and meaningfully placing gods' names in their verses and by echoing the sounds of those names, the poets bring about the presence of the gods, their epiphany. More than in any other single feature, the essential nature of a deity is expressed in the god's name. The god is who the god is because the god obeys the truth embedded in that name. Thus the goddess Dawn is the Dawn because she adheres to the truth that she appears in the morning before the sun. The god Parjanya, Thunderstorm, is the Thunderstorm because he adheres to the truth that he sends the rain. To be sure, the meanings of the names of some gods, such as Viṣṇu, the Nāsatyas, or the Maruts, are unclear or controversial, and the names of other gods, such as the Aśvins ("Horsemen"), imperfectly represent their characters. By and large, however, the names of gods define their natures and actions. This is one reason that the gods of the R̥gveda can appear to be flat, since they generally lack the complex personalities that the gods of classical India possess. But there is considerable complexity in the relations among R̥gvedic deities, in the fusion and fission of deities, and in the dimensions of gods indicated by different names and epithets.

Starting with their names, we can classify gods according to their different spheres of action. This categorization will be porous, since some gods cross boundaries of domains and functions, and will be more orderly than R̥gvedic reality, but it gives an approximate shape to the R̥gvedic pantheon. There are at least five categories of divinities. First there are gods of nature, the powers that represent and govern natural phenomena and entities, such as Sūrya, the "Sun," Vāyu "Wind," Parjanya "Thunderstorm," Uṣas "Dawn," and Dyaus and Pr̥thivī "Heaven and Earth." With some exceptions, the names of these deities are also words for the phenomena they represent. So, for example, the word *sū́rya* can signify either the

sun god or the sun itself, or, rather, it signifies both the sun god and the sun, since the two are not fully distinguished. However, these gods of nature do not act only within the natural sphere defined by their names, but enlarge their sphere of action on the basis of their natural characteristics. In I.115.1, for example, the Sun is called "the eye of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni," because the Sun, as he transits the sky, looks down upon the actions of human beings and observes whether they conform to the ritual and social principles governed by these other deities. In V.80.5 the light brought by the goddess Dawn disperses not only the physical darkness of night but also the "powers of darkness," the dangerous forces at work within the world. And according to V.83.9 the god Parjanya, Thunderstorm, not only shakes the world, but also smashes evildoers. Thus the principle of hidden connections and correspondences allows the gods of nature operate in other spheres in manners analogous to their natural functions.

A second category of divinity includes those defined by the social sphere in which they operate. The most prominent deities in this category are the three principal Ādityas: Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. As detailed below, these gods represent the different principles that define social relations, and they ensure that human beings act according to these principles. As the gods of nature have functions within the social world, so these gods of the social world also have functions within the natural world. They are associated with the sun, as illustrated by I.115.1, and Varuṇa especially governs the waters, granting them to those who uphold the principles he represents, withholding them from those who do not. In this way, the processes of the visible world become the assurance of the reality of the principles of the social world.

Still other gods are defined by an action or function that their names embody. Perhaps the most obvious example is Savitar, the "Impeller," who compels humans and other living beings to action or sends them to rest. Similarly, there is Tvaṣṭar, the "Fashioner," Viśvakarman, the "All-Maker," and various other minor "agent gods" as Macdonell (1897: 115) called them. Perhaps fitting into this category, albeit awkwardly, are the Aśvins, the "Horsemen." As the name of these two gods suggests, they characteristically drive their chariot, and their mobility is a significant part of what defines them. They ride to accomplish many purposes: to heal, to rescue, or even to facilitate marriage. As charioteers and riders, therefore, they move within a variety of places and spheres.

Fourth are gods who embody aspects of the ritual, a category dominated by the two gods who, except for Indra, are the most frequently invoked deities of the R̥gveda, Agni and Soma. Agni is the sacrificial fire and Soma the central offering at the principal sacrifice in the R̥gvedic tradition. The particular significance of the ritual gods is their accessibility to humans. Various gods can be present at the sacrifice, but Indra and other gods like Mitra and Varuṇa remain invisible. Gods like the Wind, the Dawn, or the Sun are perceptible, but they are distant or amorphous. Agni and Soma, however, are visibly, tangibly present, right in front of the priests and sacrificers, and their presence can be reliably brought

about by human action. They are the representives of the divine within reach of humans, and therefore they can create the link between gods and humans upon which the life of both gods and humans depends. So, Agni is the messenger who conveys the gods to mortals (e.g., I.14.12, III.6.9, IV.8.2, VII.11.5), and he is the Hotar priest who brings humans' offerings to the gods (e.g., I.1.1, VIII.60.1, X.7.5). And likewise, Soma descends from heaven to the human world (IX.61.10, 63.27, 66.30) and, when offered by humans, goes from these humans to the gods (IX.25.4, 39.1).

The last category belongs to Indra, who stands apart from all the other gods. Although it might once have had other resonance, the word *índra* means only Indra, which makes it not quite unique but a still rarity among the names of gods. The greatest number of hymns, nearly a quarter of all the hymns of the Ṛgveda, are dedicated to him. This preeminence in the Ṛgveda is not surprising since the soma sacrifice is primarily a sacrifice to Indra. Indra and Vāyu are the first of the paired divinities who receive soma in the morning; Indra alone or with the Maruts receives soma at midday; and, at least according to some Ṛgvedic traditions, Indra and the Ṛbhus receive soma in the evening (cf. IV.35.7). Thus, even though the soma sacrifice gradually incorporated other rites and other gods, Indra and the offerings to Indra remained central to it.

B. DEVAS AND ASURAS

Beginning with the Vedic prose texts, one of the most enduring mythological structures is the perpetual conflict between Devas (*devá* being the Sanskrit word for "god") and Asuras, with the two (almost) balanced groups contending with each other in numerous myths and myth fragments in all sorts of situations. The Asuras are, as it were, the anti-Devas, with negative traits exactly corresponding to the positive ones possessed by the Devas. In the various combats depicted, the Devas always prevail, but only barely. This conflict continues to be prominent in the post-Vedic religious landscape, as in the well-known story of the churning of the ocean of milk in which the two moieties fight over the treasures churned up.

An apparent mirror image of this paired opposition is found in Old Iranian in the Avestan texts, where *ahura*, the direct cognate of Sanskrit *ásura*, is the title of the head of the pantheon, Ahura Mazdā "Lord Wisdom," and the *daēuua*s (exact cognate of Sanskrit *devá*) are the enemies of all that is good. Although it has always been tempting to superimpose the Avestan and middle Vedic situations upon each other, the Ṛgveda makes serious difficulties. There the term *ásura* is generally in the singular, used as a title ("lord") in a positive sense, and is often applied to divinities who are otherwise identified as Devas. A particularly striking example is found in VIII.25.4 where Mitra and Varuṇa are called Devas and Asuras simultaneously (*devā́v ásurā* "[the two] Devas, [the two] Asuras"). The Asuras as a defined group only begin to appear in the late Ṛgveda. For further discussion see Hale (1986). The

history and significance of the Avestan/post-R̥gvedic mirror-image pairing of the two terms remain unclear.

C. VIŚVE DEVĀḤ

The term *víśve devā́ḥ* "all the gods" or "the All Gods" is common in the R̥gveda, and the Anukramaṇī identifies the divinity of a large number of hymns as *víśve devā́ḥ*. The term, both in its usage in the text and in its application to a hymn type, is employed in a number of different senses. On the one hand, it is a handy way to refer to the whole divine community, to ensure that no god has been left out of a generic eulogy or request for aid. In this usage the gods are not treated as individuals but as an undifferentiated group, opposed to mortals or, later, the Asuras (see just above). This group ultimately becomes conceived of as a sort of corporate entity, the All Gods. On the other hand, many Viśve Devāḥ hymns do not encompass the whole group, but name a series of individual gods, each one often allotted a single verse in a list hymn (e.g., VI.49). Here the phrase "all the gods" is a way of indicating that the hymn is not targeting a single god, as in the majority or R̥gvedic hymns, but selecting from the group. And finally a number of hymns with the Anukramaṇī designation "all gods" actually have very little to do with the gods at all, but contain meditations on the mysteries of the cosmos, of the sacrifice, or of the powers of poetry and ritual speech (see, e.g., I.105).

D. INDRA

As the preeminent god of the R̥gveda, Indra has a variety of roles. But first of all Indra is a warrior, upon whom depend the protection and prosperity of his worshipers. His weapon is the *vájra*, the mace. In later tradition, when Indra was reduced to a storm god, the vajra became a thunderbolt. But in the R̥gveda it was a weapon, which could be thrown at an enemy or smashed down upon him, and the principal means by which Indra asserted his power.

The foremost story of Indra in the R̥gveda is the narrative of the battle between Indra and Vr̥tra. Vr̥tra was a gigantic cobra, who was twisted around a mountain that enclosed the waters. In order for life to exist Vr̥tra had to be destroyed. Indra battled the serpent, alone, according to some hymns, or with the help of the Maruts or other gods, according to others. After a furious battle Indra killed Vr̥tra with his mace and smashed open the mountain, releasing the waters. This myth is occasionally merged with others, so that not only the waters but also the cattle and the sun emerge from the mountain. The name Vr̥tra means "obstacle," and one of the characteristic epithets of Indra is *vr̥trahán*, which can mean either "smasher of Vr̥tra" or "smasher of obstacles." There is little difference between these two interpretations, however, since Vr̥tra is the paradigm of all obstacles. To evoke Indra as the smasher of Vr̥tra, therefore, is to evoke him as the god who smashes all obstacles.

The narrative of the destruction of Vṛtra is associated particularly with the midday soma-pressing, which is dedicated to Indra alone or to Indra and the Maruts.

The Vala myth is the second great narrative of Indra and a complement to the Vṛtra story. According to this myth a group called the Paṇis captured the cattle and kept them trapped in the Vala cave. Indra opened the Vala cave and released the cattle and the dawns. Remarkable in this story is that Indra does not release the cattle using his mace as his weapon, but rather using the power of the truth in the songs he chants. Accompanying him and joining him in his chant are groups of priests, the Aṅgirases, sometimes along with the Navagvas or the Daśagvas. In this narrative, therefore, Indra is a priest-king rather than a warrior-king as he is in the Vṛtra myth. In his role as priest-king Indra is also called *bṛ́haspáti*, the "lord of the sacred formulation." Bṛhaspati appears not only as Indra, but also as a separate divinity alongside Indra. Gradually, as Indra and the Vedic king, who personifies Indra, progressively lose their priestly functions in the late Ṛgveda and in the later Vedic tradition, Bṛhaspati increasingly stands apart from Indra. As the Vṛtra story is connected with the Midday Pressing, so the Vala story was associated with the Morning Pressing, which takes place with the appearance of dawn. In the Ṛgvedic period the *dakṣiṇā*, the reward of cattle to the priests, was also given at the Morning Pressing. The cattle that come to the priests thus reflect the advent of the cattle and dawns in the world.

Although the two major mythological narratives with Indra as protagonist are the Vṛtra and the Vala victories, he figures in many other episodes—too many to mention here—which are often fragmentarily attested and poorly understood.

We may start with his parentage. Although the identity of Indra's mother is not clear, in the occasional mentions of her she is a vivid character—as in the snatches of dialogue between him and his mother in the famous birth hymn IV.18, where she tries to persuade him not to pursue an unnatural exit from her womb. Elsewhere she offers him soma to drink directly after his birth, soma that he stole from his father, named as Tvaṣṭar (III.48; also IV.18.3). And in an even more enigmatic snatch of dialogue (VIII.45.4–6 ≅ VIII.77.1–2) she seems to reassure the just-born Indra that he will ultimately prevail. As just noted, Indra seems to participate in a rivalry with his father, who may be Tvaṣṭar. The unnatural birth and the rivalry with the divine father are of course well-nigh universal attributes of "the hero"; the many prodigious feats attributed to Indra just after his birth are also typical of heroic biography.

Two minor but intriguing myths pit Indra against the two most important forms of celestial light, the Sun and Dawn. We find the merest allusions (primarily IV.30.8–11) to a puzzling episode in which Indra crushes the cart of Dawn and she runs away. Alluded to just a bit more (primarily V.29.5, 9–10; V.31.11; I.121.13) is the chariot race in which Indra bests the chariot of the Sun, apparently by tearing the wheel off his chariot. This latter myth is somehow connected with one that is better attested, though hardly better understood, in which Indra and a sidekick Kutsa drive on the same chariot, drawn by the horses of the Wind, to the house

of Uśanā Kāvya (a name with a shadowy attestation also in Avestan mythology), to receive some aid or advice, preliminary to slaying Śuṣṇa, the often-mentioned opponent of Kutsa.

Indra has a number of other named adversaries. In one striking whiff of a narrative, Indra, aided by Viṣṇu in some versions, shoots a boar named Emuṣa, enabling him to acquire a special mess of rice porridge hidden in or behind a mountain (see esp. VIII.77; also VIII.69.14–15, I.61.7). This myth is further developed in Vedic prose. Another myth with more presence in later texts involves Indra's slaying of Namuci by beheading him (e.g., V.30.7–8). In the later versions Indra accomplishes this by trickery, and part of the trick (using the foam of the waters as weapon) is already mentioned once in the R̥gveda (VIII.14.13). The names of other victims of Indra include Śambara, Pipru, Dhuni and Cumuri, and Varcin, inter alia. The details of these battles are too sketchy to provide much in the way of narrative mythology.

Like a number of other gods, Indra has his characteristic draft-animals, and his are especially prominently featured in the text. His pair of fallow bays (*hárī*) conveys him everywhere, especially to and from the sacrifice. They have their own food offered to them at the sacrifice (roasted grain, see, e.g., III.35), and hymns were even devoted to a libation made when the pair was hitched up for the return journey after the sacrifice (see I.61–63). The mention of the fallow bays is sufficient to signal that Indra is present in the context, and *hárivant* "possessing the fallow bays" is a standing epithet of Indra.

E. AGNI "FIRE"

The word *agní* is both the common noun meaning "fire" and the name of the god who is deified fire. As with *sóma* (see below), it is often difficult to draw the line between these uses. The sacrificial system of the R̥gveda (and later Vedic texts), like that of the cognate Old Iranian Avestan texts, is focused around the ritual fire. The sacrificial ground is defined by the presence of sanctified fire(s), oblations are made into them, and the gods and priests gather round them. Thus, first and foremost, Agni is the god always present at our ritual performances and the immediate recipient of our offerings. He is the most prominent of the R̥gvedic gods after Indra, and all the Family Books and most of the smaller bardic collections open with their Agni hymns.

Agni as ritual fire is both recipient of oblations in his own right and the conduit of oblations destined for other gods, which are offered into the ritual fire. He is therefore regularly called the mouth of the gods, and his role as the middleman between the human offerers and divine recipients is often emphasized. The flames and especially the smoke of the fire carry the oblations to heaven, but also, perhaps more often, serve as a means for the gods to come to earth to our sacrifice: Agni is said to be the conveyor of the gods many, many times in the text. He is a middleman in another sense, as a *god* who nonetheless dwells intimately among *mortals*. For us

he is both ally and messenger to the more distant gods, and since he is not one of us but a divinity, he is viewed as and often called our guest.

But the ritual fire is not the only form of Agni. The poets emphasize both the divine aspects of Agni and his purely physical form, often intermingling references to different forms of fire in the same hymn. As a god he is often identified with the sun, the celestial form of fire: blazing hot, shining bright, and appearing at the same time of day, namely dawn when the sun rises and the ritual fire is kindled. But the fire on our sacrificial ground is also clearly kin to the fire on our domestic hearth; indeed in later śrauta ritual the fire from which the other ritual fires are taken out is called the Gārhapatya or "householders' (fire)." Agni is therefore also praised for his contribution to daily life and the pleasures of home and family.

The potentially destructive aspects of fire are not forgotten, however. Many of the most inventive descriptions in Agni hymns are of the wild, uncontrollable rampages of forest fire, spreading across the land and "eating" everything in its path. We seek to harness this destructive power of fire, to turn it against our enemies and other threats to our safety, and Agni, sometimes with the epithet *rakṣohán* "demon-smasher," is urged to turn his relentless flames against opponents we name. A subtype of destructive fire is the funeral fire, the "flesh-eating" fire of cremation, which is both welcomed and feared (see esp. X.16).

The paradoxical nature of physical fire also provides some part of the god Agni's personal qualities. That fire is fueled by plants, especially wood, contributes to the belief that Agni lives concealed within the plants, even very juicy ones, until his birth. Agni also comes to be identified with a minor divinity going back to Indo-Iranian times, Apām Napāt "child of the waters," who was probably originally separate—a glowing fiery being concealed and nurtured in the waters, probably configured in part as lightning.

The creation or birth of the ritual fire from the kindling sticks, his parents, is a major subject in Agni hymns, with intricate descriptions of the first stirrings of flame and smoke as the friction of the kindling sticks produces sparks that finally catch. The just-born Agni is depicted as a tender babe, who quickly grows to become stronger than his parents and to devour the plants from which he was born.

Many aspects of Agni are expressed through the variety of names and epithets applied to him. Agni is Jātavedas as the fire established at the beginning of the rite that continues to its end. As an unbroken presence in the ritual, Agni Jātavedas also oversees the succession of generations, ensuring that a family's lineage will continue. Agni Vaiśvānara is the fire become the sun. As the sun, this fire sees everything and governs everyone. This form of Agni is especially associated with the king, who like the sun stands above and reaches all beings. The word *vaiśvānará* means the one "relating to all men." Agni is also Tanūnapāt and Narāśaṃsa. One or another of these names—or sometimes both (I.13.2–3)—appear in the Āprī hymns, which are recited in an animal sacrifice, and they both occur outside of the Āprī hymns as well. The word *tánūnápāt* describes Agni as the "son of himself," and *nárāśáṃsa* as the one "who embodies men's praise" of the gods. As Agni Kravyād,

the "flesh-eating fire," Agni is the fire of the funeral pyre that consumes the body of the deceased and transports it to heaven. Mātariśvan is sometimes identified as Agni himself, but he is more properly the one who brought the fire from heaven.

Agni participates in almost no narrative mythology, in strong contrast to Indra. Besides the very sketchy account of Mātariśvan's theft of fire from heaven, there is one, ritually connected, tale—of Agni's flight from the sacrificial ground and his self-concealment in the waters, to avoid his ritual role as bearer of oblations to the gods. The gods find him in his hiding place and coax him back by promising him a share of the oblations. This myth is treated most fully in the late sequence X.51–53, but there are glancing mentions of it elsewhere. The story may have in part been generated by the conflation of Agni with the originally distinct divine figure Apām Napāt "Child of the Waters," on which see II.35.

F. SOMA

Like Agni, Soma is both a god and a crucial ritual substance, and the boundary between them is not always clear. As has already been discussed, the juice of the soma plant (whatever that may have been), pressed from the plant and elaborately prepared, is the chief offering of the most important complex of rituals, the soma sacrifice. This sacrificial substance and its ritual preparation go back to the Indo-Iranian period, since Avestan attests to the substance *haoma*, an exact cognate to Sanskrit *sóma,* and to its pressing and offering (see especially the so-called Hōm Yašt, Y 9–10). In both traditions the substance is also deified.

The "Soma Maṇḍala" of the R̥gveda, Maṇḍala IX, contains 114 hymns dedicated to Soma Pavamāna "Self-Purifying Soma." These hymns focus entirely on a single ritual moment, the pressing of the plant, the straining of the juice by pouring it over a sheep's fleece to trap the impurities (twigs and the like), the mixing of the juice first with water and then with milk, and the pouring into containers prior to offering it to the gods, especially Indra. These actions are often presented metaphorically, with Soma conceptualized as a king making a royal progress across the filter and into the cups, a progress that can be compared to the conquering of territory. Or as the Sun in his journey through the cosmos. Or, quite often, as a bull racing to mate with a herd of cows, who represent the milk with which the juice will be mixed. Soma is thus regularly presented as having agency in the many descriptions of the purification of the liquid.

Besides this dynamic deification especially characteristic of the IXth Maṇḍala, there is little narrative mythology involving the god Soma. The most important tale is the theft of Soma from heaven, where he was confined in a citadel guarded by an archer called Kr̥śānu. A falcon stole him and brought him to earth, successfully evading serious injury from Kr̥śānu's arrow, to deliver him to Manu, the first sacrificer. This exploit is mentioned a number of times in the text, but is most fully described in IV.26–27.

Though one characteristic of Soma in later texts, a commonplace already in middle Vedic, is his identification with the moon, this equation is only attested in

the very late Ṛgveda. It is clearly found only in the Wedding Hymn (X.85), whose first verses depict the wedding of Soma and Sūryā, daughter of the Sun. The bridegroom Soma in this hymn has clear lunar qualities, which are distinguished from his identity as an earthy ritual substance.

G. ADITI AND THE ĀDITYAS

As a group, the Ādityas generally represent the powers that order human society. This function is most evident in the three principal Ādityas, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. In addition to these three, however, there are minor deities who are also called Ādityas—Dakṣa, Bhaga, and Aṃśa—and a number of other gods, such as Savitar and Sūrya, who may be called Ādityas when they exercise functions like those of the major Ādityas.

The Ādityas are sons of the goddess Aditi, whose name means "offenselessness" or "innocence." She embodies obedience to the principles of right social behavior that her sons represent. Later, the motherhood of Aditi becomes central to her identity and she becomes a mother to other deities.

The most prominent of the Ādityas is Varuṇa, whose name is related to *vratá* "commandment" and who therefore is the god of commandments. While all the major Ādityas are kings, Varuṇa in particular represents the authority of the king. In IV.42, as in the later Rājasūya, the king becomes both Varuṇa and Indra; that is, as Varuṇa, the king is a judicial authority governing the actions of his subjects, and as Indra, he is a leader in war. Accordingly, the divine acts of Varuṇa were often reflected in the functions of the Ṛgvedic king. Like the king, Varuṇa watches over his subjects by means of his *spáśaḥ* "spies" (e.g., I.25.13). One of the responsibilities of the king was to ensure the prosperity of his subjects by providing sufficient water for animals and crops. Therefore, the divine king Varuṇa brings rain (V.85.3–4) and controls the waters, causing them to flow according to his commandment (II.28.4). As the king orders the human world, so Varuṇa orders both the human world and the world at large: the moon and stars appear and disappear according to his commandment (I.24.10), and he makes a place and a path for the sun in the sky (I.24.8, V.85.2, VII.87.1, 5). The king maintained the social order by punishing wrong-doers, and, likewise, poets fear Varuṇa's anger and his fetters (*pā́śāḥ*), with which he binds those who violate his commandments (e.g., I.24.15, 25.21). Varuṇa is the master of the truth that governs the actions of things, as the king must be as well (II.28.6). Given that his kingship complements Indra's, we might have expected Varuṇa to have had a greater presence in the Ṛgveda than he does. However, the Ṛgveda emerged primarily from the soma rite, and the soma rite belongs to Indra. In the Ṛgvedic period there probably were other rites dedicated to Varuṇa or to Varuṇa and other Ādityas—there is such a rite in the classical tradition—but these left little trace in the Ṛgveda.

In most hymns Varuṇa is closely connected to Mitra, with whom he shares most of his royal functions. Unlike *váruṇa*, the meaning of *mitrá* is reasonably certain. A *mitrá* was an ally or an alliance, and Mitra is the god of alliances. While Varuṇa

governs relations in which one person has authority over another, Mitra governs relations defined by mutual obligations. These two kinds of relationships overlap with one another, so it is not surprising that the functions of Mitra and Varuṇa likewise often coincide and that the two gods are so often paired. Only one hymn, III.59, is dedicated to Mitra alone. As the god of alliances, Mitra governs peace agreements between different people, ensuring that they will take their proper places (III.59.1, 5; cf. VII.36.2) and remain in them (III.59.6). When other gods have functions similar to Mitra's, they may be identified with him. In particular, Agni is sometimes called Mitra (e.g., III.5.4) or creates a *mitrá*, an alliance, when he appears at dawn. The alliance to which such passages refer is the sacrificial alliance between gods and mortals. Humans offer the truth in their hymns and offer soma, milk, ghee, and the like as their oblations. In this way, they empower the gods, and the gods in turn provide what is necessary for human life.

The last of the major Ādityas is Aryaman, the god of the customs of the Āryas. He therefore represents a third social principle, the customary rules that govern relations among Vedic tribes and peoples. This principle was especially essential in a society where the authority of the ruler would not have penetrated deeply into the daily lives or the households of his people. Among the spheres in which custom determined behavior was marriage, which created a new social bond between unrelated families. Since marriage depended on the recognition of custom, marriage fell within Aryaman's governance. While we have presented Aryaman as the god of customs, Thieme (1938, 1957) and other scholars following him have preferred to see Aryaman more narrowly as the god governing the rules of hospitality. In the absence of a state, the Vedic peoples needed to expect Ārya strangers to recognize and to act according to the customary norms of hospitality. Such norms were critical in creating the possibility of relations among Āryas and therefore in unifying them. Aryaman does not often appear apart from Varuṇa and Mitra and shares their broader roles in maintaining the natural as well as the social world.

Although relatively minor presences, three other gods, Bhaga, the god of fortune, Aṃśa, the god of the share, and Dakṣa, the god of (priestly) skill, are also called Ādityas. Bhaga ensures that people will receive an appropriate portion of the goods of life. He is often linked with Aryaman and with the expectation for the prosperity of a marriage. Aṃśa ensures that people will receive the share of goods owed them, and therefore he is concerned with inheritance. In both cases, the two gods bring goods to people according to their behavior and family identity, and that function brings them within the sphere of social principles represented by the major Ādityas. Like the major Ādityas, Dakṣa is also concerned with right behavior, but in his case, it is the skilled actions of sacrificers. For further on the Ādityas, see Brereton (1981).

H. SAVITAR

Sometimes linked to the Ādityas and especially to Bhaga is the god Savitar. He is the god who "impels" or "compels" beings—and these can include mortals, gods,

animals, and objects. He especially acts at the beginning of night, when he sends beings to rest (cf. I.35.2, IV.53.3, VII.45.1). But he also commands the end of the night and the beginning of the day, when he brings forth the sun (I.35.9) and impels beings to action. Because he is associated with the night, he is also connected with the generation of offspring, who would be conceived during the night. Savitar is bright, with golden eyes, golden arms, and golden hands. He stretches out his arms in a gesture of command (II.38.2). Falk (1988: 17–22) reasonably suggests that his brilliance during the night and his outstretched arms point to the Milky Way as a manifestation of Savitar.

I. SŪRYA

If the Milky Way is the celestial embodiment of Savitar, Sūrya, the Sun, comes close to being that of Mitra and Varuṇa. The Sun is their eye, for his gaze is wide (VII.35.8) and falls on everyone (I.50.2). The Sun watches over the good and evil deeds of humans (VI.51.2, VII.60.2–3) and, so the poet hopes, declares the innocence of the sacrificers to Mitra and Varuṇa (VII.60.1, 62.2). The Sun is the felly that rolls toward Mitra and Varuṇa (V.62.2) or the chariot that the two gods set in heaven (V.63.7). Since he is so closely linked to the Ādityas, he himself is called an Āditya (I.50.13, 191.9; VIII.101.11). His link to the Ādityas is also a link to the king, who oversees his subjects the way that the Sun oversees all beings (X.121 and Proferes 2007: 137–41).

However, Sūrya is not associated exclusively with the Ādityas. He is a form of Agni, Agni Vaiśvānara, and the face of Agni. Not only the Ādityas (IV.13.2) or Mitra and Varuṇa (V.63.4), but also Varuṇa and Indra (VII.82.3), Agni (X.3.2), Soma (VI.44.23, IX.86.22), and Indra and Viṣṇu (VII.99.4) are said to have given birth to the Sun, to have caused him rise to heaven, or to have established his brilliance.

A number of images depict the movement of the sun through the heavens. The Sun flies through the air on a chariot pulled by seven horses or seven mares (I.50.8, 9, IV.13.3, V.45.9), or the Sun is a wheel pulled by only one horse, Etaśa (VII.63.2). The Sun is also the “reddish eagle” (V.77.3) or a falcon (V.45.9), or he flies like a falcon (VII.63.5). However, there are relatively few narratives concerning the Sun. One repeated but mysterious story is that Indra stole or tore off the wheel of the Sun. He did so in order to help his ally Kutsa in Kutsa’s battle against Śuṣṇa (I.130.9, 175.4, IV.30.4, V.29.10). What exactly Indra accomplished by doing this and how this helped Kutsa remain unclear.

J. UṢAS “DAWN”

Dawn is one of the few female divinities in the R̥gveda and the most prominent among them. Twenty-one hymns are dedicated to her alone (every maṇḍala but II, VIII, and of course IX containing at least one), many of them displaying high poetic artistry and beauty of imagery, and she is mentioned hundreds of times in

the text. She also has an Indo-European pedigree, being cognate with the Greek goddess Eos and the Latin goddess Aurora.

The femininity of Dawn is one of her defining characteristics. She is generally depicted as a beautiful young woman, flirtatious and scantily dressed. Since she embodies the first light of day, she is gleaming and covered with bright ornaments, and her appearance thus strongly contrasts with that of her dark sister Night, a much less prominent goddess, though the ceaseless alternation of Dawn and Night is often remarked on. Her dispelling of the darkness and of fears of night is much appreciated, as she awakens and rouses everyone to their daily activities. Dawn is also, not surprisingly, associated with the god Sun, Sūrya, who is often depicted as following her as her suitor or husband. She is also said to be the mother or possessor of cows—the cows being the milky sky and rays of light at early dawn (see Watkins 1987 and 2009 for the Indo-European trope of "the milk of the dawn cows").

Her associations are not all positive, however. Because she heralds every new day, she reminds men of the unstoppable passage of time and of the aging process, as well as of the generations of men who used to view the dawn but have passed away. Dawn's daily rebirth as an ever-young beauty presents a cruel contrast to the human condition of change and decay. The poets also often reflect on the paradox that each Dawn is new but each is the same as the one before and the one that will come after.

The characteristics of Dawn mentioned above are reflections of the universal nature of dawn, but she also displays culturally specific qualities relating to Vedic ritual. Dawn ushers in the sacrificial day, especially the kindling of the ritual fire preparatory to the early-morning rites, and the interplay between the natural sources of light—dawn and the sun—and the man-made one—fire—is often described as complex and co-determined. Moreover, Dawn is regularly associated with wealth and its distribution to the sacrificial participants and is urged to give generously to them. This association between wealth and dawn has no naturalistic source, but arises from the fact that in R̥gvedic ritual the dakṣiṇās or "priestly gifts" were distributed to the priests and poets at the early-morning rites (rather than at midday, as in classical śrauta ritual).

Despite the vividness of her depiction, Dawn participates very little in narrative mythology, though there is a briefly alluded to (primarily IV.30.8–11) and extremely enigmatic tale in which Indra smashes the cart of "evilly angry" Dawn, and she runs away. Why Indra should turn against this emblem of benevolent femininity is unclear, but the story is also associated with Indra's stealing the wheel off the Sun's chariot, and both may have to do with the perturbation of regular temporal sequences.

K. VĀYU / VĀTA "WIND"

As his name indicates, Vāyu is an ancient god of the Wind, although verses to Vāyu that refer to the phenomenon of wind are somewhat rare and oblique. For example,

the roar of Vāyu echoes the sound of the wind, his hundredfold (I.135.3) or thousandfold (I.135.1) team reflects the wind's speed, and the Maruts, who personify thunderstorms especially the monsoon storms, are born from his belly (I.134.4). Such characteristics show Vāyu's close connection to the wind, even though he does not represent the wind directly.

On the soma-pressing day, Vāyu is the first of the gods to receive the soma (I.134.1, 6; VII.92.1; cf. II.11.14), which he drinks unmixed (I.134.5, VII.90.1–2). But Vāyu also arrives with Indra on the same chariot, and the two of them share the first drink of soma. Just how both Vāyu and Vāyu and Indra have the first drink of soma is unclear, but, following a suggestion of Oberlies (1999: 155), perhaps Vāyu's first drink reflects soma's symbolic descent through the midspace as it is filtered, and the first drink of Vāyu and Indra is the first soma libation.

The ordinary word for the wind is *vā́ta*, and unlike Vāyu, the god Vāta closely reflects the character and activity of the wind. He goes shattering and thundering, raising the dust; he moves through the midspace and is the companion of the waters. The symbolic features of Vāta likewise reflect the wind. Vāta is the breath (*ātmán*) of the gods (X.168.4), and as the lifebreath, he is the father, brother, and companion of the man whom he makes live (X.186.1–3). Like the Sun and the Dawn, therefore, Vāta, the Wind, is completely transparent to the natural phenomenon to which his name refers.

L. AŚVINS

The Aśvins, the two "Horsemen," are old Indo-Iranian or even Indo-European deities who have been brought into the soma rite. They are also called Nāsatyas, a name of obscure meaning and etymology, found already in an ancient Near Eastern Hatti-Mitanni treaty dating from the fourteenth century BCE (in the form Na-ša-at-ti-i̯a) and in the Avestan cognate, Nā̊ŋhaiθya. It is probably the older name of this pair, with the lexically transparent *aśvín* originally an epithet. The Aśvins are connected with honey, *mádhu*, and while soma comes to be called "honeyed" and "honey," *mádhu* was likely in origin a different offering to the Aśvins. They are also connected with the Pravargya rite and the offering of gharma, hot milk. Because they are two, the Aśvins find a place particularly in the morning soma offerings, which are primarily dedicated to the dual divinities Indra and Vāyu and Mitra and Varuṇa. Reflecting their association with the Morning Pressing, the Aśvins appear in the early dawn: they come at the break of dawn (I.157.1, VII.72.4), follow the chariot of Dawn (VIII.5.2), or accompany the dawn (X.61.4). However, they also receive the last soma offerings in an Atirātra, or Overnight Soma Ritual. Therefore, even if they were secondarily grafted onto the soma rite, that graft was a strong one. They are the fourth most frequently invoked deities in the R̥gveda after Indra, Agni, and Soma.

As "horsemen," the Aśvins are chariot riders and drivers, rather than horse riders. Their chariot is an object of special attention for the poets. It is often

threefold, with three chariot-boxes, three wheels, three turnings (I.118.1–2), and three wheel-rims (I.34.2). The sacrifice with its three soma-pressings is compared to a chariot, so the Aśvins' threefold chariot may represent the sacrifice. Their chariot is also swift—"swifter than a mortal's thought" (I.118.1) or than the wink of an eye (VIII.73.2). Their chariot is drawn by various animals including bulls, buffaloes, and horses, but also by birds (I.119.4), geese (IV.45.4), or falcons (I.118.4). Their chariot flies to many places and makes the Aśvins present in many spheres: in heaven, earth, and the sea, in the flood of heaven (VIII.26.17), among plants, and at the peak of a mountain (VII.70.3). The Aśvins' speed and mobility are essential for them, for they are gods who rescue people from various dangers and difficulties in various places and circumstances.

The story of the Aśvins that the poets mention most often is their rescue of Bhujyu, the son of Tugra, whom his father had abandoned in the sea (e.g., I.116.3). They also rescued Rebha from the waters, when he was bound, confined, and left for dead (I.112.5, 116.24, 119.6). They raised up Vandana (I.118.6), although exactly from what is not clear. They rescued Atri from an earth cleft (V.78.4) and from threatening heat (I.112.7). They found Viṣṇāpū, who was lost, and restored him to his father, Viśvaka (I.116.23, 117.7). They restored the youth and vigor of Cyavāna, who had grown old (I.117.13, 118.6; VII.71.5), and of the aging Kali (X.39.8). They brought Kamadyū, the daughter of Purumitra, to be a wife for Vimada (I.116.1, 117.20; X.39.7, 65.12) and gave a son to Vadhrimatī, a woman "whose husband is a steer" (I.116.13, 117.24; X.39.7, 65.12). They restored the sight of Ṛjrāśva, who had been blinded by his father (I.116.16, 117.17, 18). They replaced the lost foot of the mare Viśpalā with a metal shank (I.116.15) and made the cow of Śayu give milk (I.116.22, 117.20, 118.8). They gave a swift, white horse to Pedu (I.116.6, X.39.10), and they set a horse's head on Dadhyañc, the son of Atharvan, in order for him to reveal the honey to them (I.116.12). Not only do they arrange marriage or bring a child to a marriage, they themselves wed or woo Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun. While sometimes the husband of Sūryā is Soma (X.85) or Pūṣan (VI.58.4), elsewhere she chooses the Aśvins as her husbands (I.119.5, IV.43.2, 6, VII.69.3–4) and rides with them on their chariot (I.116.17, VIII.8.10).

What the Aśvins do has been relatively uncontroversial. Why they do it and what is their character have been more difficult questions. Early scholars tried to place them in the natural world: Yāska cites interpreters who understood them to be heaven and earth, day and night, and the sun and the moon. Such interpretations have been largely and rightly abandoned. Early on, Western scholars observed their similarity and therefore possible genetic relationship to the Greek Dioskouroi. Both pairs ride or drive horses; both are young men (*koũroi* in Greek, *yúvānā* in Sanskrit); both are sons or, in the case of the Aśvins, perhaps grandsons of Heaven (*divó nápātā*); both rescue people in trouble; and both are called twins. Focusing on the last characteristic, Zeller (1990) sought to show that the Aśvins' acts reflect above all the fact they are twins. So, for example, she explains their concern with sexuality and rescue as partly due to their birth. Because they have one mother but

two fathers, they themselves are endowed with a greater sexual potency, and because one of their fathers is mortal, they are closer to humans and inclined to help them. The circumstances of their birth are not very clear in the R̥gveda, however, and it is not certain that they were often considered twins or that their twinship was their central feature. Along somewhat similar lines, Oberlies (1993) suggests that the Aśvins as dual divinities can extend between opposites. They are essentially gods of the intermediate sphere, who facilitate movement between spheres: between childlessness and birth, death and life, old age and youth, non-marriage and marriage, and so forth. This is a reasonable explanation of the Aśvins, which might be extrapolated from the R̥gvedic evidence, but it is not expressed in it.

M. MARUTS

The Maruts are a troop of male gods. Though they lack individual identities, they are quite prominent as a group: over thirty hymns are dedicated to them alone and several more to them in conjunction with Indra, and they are frequently mentioned elsewhere. Their character has both naturalistic and social aspects. On the one hand, they are the embodiments of the thunderstorm, especially of the monsoon, and many of their aspects reflect this natural phenomenon: like lightning, they are brilliant and flashing, bedecked with ornaments and glittering weapons; like thunder, they are excessively noisy on their wild chariot journeys, causing the earth to shake with fear, bending the trees and even the mountain; like thunderclouds, they are shape-shifting and sometimes clothed in gray; and they are accompanied by floods of rain. The terror they inspire is more than balanced by the fructifying rains they bring. All these physical aspects of the Maruts often inspire the poets to vivid and imaginative language.

As a social phenomenon, the Maruts represent the Männerbund, an association of young men, usually at a stage of life without significant other social ties (such as wife and children), who band together for rampageous and warlike pursuits. The violence of the thunderstorm is akin to the violence of these unruly age-mates, raiding and roistering. It is not unlikely that Vedic society contained and licensed such groups among its young men, given the frequent warfare depicted in the R̥gveda, and the divine Maruts provide the charter for this association and behavior.

The Maruts are not, however, entirely without social ties. Their parentage is clear, though the manner of their birth problematic and disputed—and often alluded to as a mystery. Their mother is a dappled cow, Pr̥śni, who can display androgynous characteristics and behavior; their father is Rudra, and they are often themselves referred to as Rudras. Moreover, they have a female companion, Rodasī. When the word *ródasī* appears in the dual number, it refers to the two world-halves, but as a singular (also accented *rodasī́*) it is the name of the Maruts' consort, a beautiful young woman who accompanies them on their chariot. Their normal location in the midspace between the two world-halves is presumably responsible for her name.

Perhaps the Maruts' most important companion is Indra, for whom they serve as a sort of posse: *marútvant* "accompanied by the Maruts" is one of Indra's standing epithets. Their major role in dynamic mythology was to provide support and encouragement to Indra before the Vṛtra battle, an episode also treated in Vedic prose narratives. But, according to one of the most striking hymns in the Ṛgveda, I.165, a dialogue among Indra, the Maruts, and the seer Agastya, Indra disputed the extent of their aid at that time. In this hymn Indra and the Maruts argue over their respective rights to a sacrifice offered by Agastya; Indra asserts his rights in part because he claims the Maruts abandoned him to fight Vṛtra alone, though elsewhere in the Ṛgveda (and later) there is no doubt about their supportive role in that combat.

This mythological contretemps has its reflection also in ritual, in fact to a ritual change occurring during the Ṛgvedic period. Although in some of the Family Books Indra alone is the recipient of the offering at the Midday Pressing, in Maṇḍalas III and VI, in scattered mentions elsewhere, and in the classical śrauta ritual, the Maruts share the Midday Pressing with Indra. The tense negotiations among Indra, the Maruts, and the sacrificer Agastya in I.165 and I.170–171 suggest that the change in recipients of the midday oblation was a contested topic for Ṛgvedic ritualists and the inclusion of the Maruts needed and was given mythological underpinning.

N. HEAVEN AND EARTH

One of the most remarkable and satisfying phrasal equations across the older Indo-European languages is that of Vedic *dyaúṣ pitā́* "father Heaven" with Greek Zeus Pater and Latin Jupiter, thus attesting to a deified paternal Heaven for Proto-Indo-European as well as the older daughter languages. Ironically perhaps, the Vedic god, the meaning of whose name is still transparent and lexically additive, is far less important in the Vedic pantheon than his correspondents in the Classical languages, where the original semantics have become attenuated or have disappeared entirely.

In the Ṛgveda, Heaven as a divinity is generally paired with the female Earth, who is frequently referred to as "mother," with the two a complementary parental pair. They are normally grammatically joined in a dual *dvandva* compound (*dyā́vā-pṛthivī́*), and several hymns are dedicated to this couple. If Heaven and Earth are the archetypal parents, who are their progeny? This is mentioned less than one might expect, but in a few hymns it is clearly stated that the gods are their children and especially the Sun. A less beneficent aspect of Heaven's fatherhood is found in a myth, obliquely but vividly referred to a few times in the Ṛgveda (I.71.5, 8; X.61.5–7) and told more clearly in Vedic prose (though with Prajāpati substituting for Heaven)—namely his rape of his own daughter.

Heaven and Earth also give shape to and encompass the cosmos, providing a safe enclosure within which life can flourish. The separation of the two to create

this space is the primal cosmogonic moment, and Indra's accomplishment of this separation by propping them apart is endlessly celebrated.

O. TVAṢṬAR

The meaning of Tvaṣṭar's name is fully transparent: he is the "Fashioner," who "adorned all the creatures with their forms" (X.110.9) and who knows all living things (IV.42.3). But his role is more complex than his name might imply. He is the father of Indra (III.48.2–4, IV.18), whom Indra displaced and from whom Indra stole the soma (III.48.4). On the other hand, Tvaṣṭar fashioned Indra's distinctive weapon, the mace, for him (I.32.2, V.31.4, VI.17.10, X.48.3). Tvaṣṭar is also sometimes called the father of Agni (III.7.4), and he is the god who has begotten offspring (III.55.19; cf. III.4.9). His role as a father perhaps explains his close relationship with the Wives of the Gods (I.22.9, 161.4; II.1.5, 31.4, 36.3; VII.35.6), with whom he is ritually joined.

P. R̥BHUS

In some forms of the soma sacrifice, the three R̥bhus have a significant role as principal soma recipients in the Third Pressing. But despite that role, they have a limited presence in the R̥gveda itself. Only ten hymns are dedicated to the R̥bhus, together with one other that invokes the R̥bhus along with Indra. Nonetheless, despite their decidedly low profile in the R̥gveda, their principal actions emerge clearly. The R̥bhu hymns repeatedly return to five great deeds for which the R̥bhus are famed. They took a soma cup made by the god Tvaṣṭar and fashioned it into four cups (III.60.2; IV.33.5, 35.2, 3, 36.4). They made a chariot, sometimes identified as the chariot of the Aśvins (I.20.3, 111.1, 161.3; IV.33.8). They created the two fallow bay horses of Indra (I.20.2, 111.1; III.60.2; IV.33.10, 34.9, 35.5). They fashioned a cow, or made a cow give milk, or carved up a cow (I.20.3, 110.8, 161.7, 10; IV.33.4). And lastly, they rejuvenated their aging parents (I.20.4, 110.8, 111.1; IV.33.3, 35.5, 36.3). Significantly, as a result of these creative acts, the R̥bhus are said to have attained immortality or to have become gods.

Their skillful acts are essentially priestly, and their great deeds reflect ritual acts or, more specifically, ritual acts at the Third Pressing. The four soma cups they created are the cups of the four principal soma-drinkers: Indra and the three R̥bhus. As mentioned above, the Aśvins' chariot can represent the sacrifice, and therefore the chariot they made could be the sacrifice in general. The creation of the fallow bays of Indra is reflected by a special soma offering in the Third Pressing that marks the departure of the two horses of Indra. The cow over which they work may represent the soma stalks from the previous soma-pressings, which are pressed again at the Third Pressing. The R̥bhus cause these depleted "cows" to release even more milk, which is the soma juice. Their last deed, the rejuvenation of their parents, is more mysterious, but it might represent the return or "rejuvenation" of the Aśvins

at the end of the sacrifice in an Overnight rite or it could reflect the rejuvenation of the sacrificer and his wife, since the fertility of the sacrificing couple is a theme of the Third Pressing. For a more detailed discussion of the acts of the R̥bhus and their meaning, see Brereton (2012).

Q. PŪṢAN

Although Pūṣan is a minor god in the R̥gveda, with only eight hymns dedicated to him alone and several more shared with more prominent divinities (Indra and Soma), his idiosyncratic characteristics and the special diction used in his hymns attract more than his share of attention to him. Of the bardic families, only the Bharadvājas of Maṇḍala VI favor this god; they dedicate five hymns to him (VI.53–56, 58) with a further one to Pūṣan and Indra (VI.57) and a significant portion of the composite hymn VI.48; the three other hymns exclusive to him are found in I and X.

The characteristics ascribed to him are humble and somewhat countrified: his draft-animals are goats, his tools generally an awl and a goad, his food of choice is porridge, and the skills he deploys for us are especially the protection of the roads and the finding of lost articles, particularly cattle. The level of discourse is often colloquial and lively, though he is occasionally celebrated in a register more appropriate to loftier divinities.

One striking feature does not fit this profile: Pūṣan in several passages is said to be the husband or consort of Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, who is the archetypal bride in the R̥gveda, and he is also said to be the lover of his sister and the wooer of his mother (VI.55.4–5), though this apparent incest provokes no blame. The tangled family relations thus alluded to are not treated in any detail, so we are left with only tantalizing clues.

R. VIṢṆU

In the middle Vedic period, Viṣṇu became a central figure as the embodiment of the sacrifice itself and therefore of a power that can exceed even the might of the gods. In classical India, of course, he finds an even greater destiny. There is little sign of those futures of Viṣṇu in the R̥gveda, since it has only a half dozen hymns dedicated to Viṣṇu or to Indra and Viṣṇu (I.154, 155, 156; VI.69; VII.99, 100). Viṣṇu appears alongside Indra fairly often, especially in his battle with Vr̥tra (IV.18.11, VI.20.2, VIII.100.12), and he is also Indra's partner and ally generally. The only acts that are especially his are his three strides or three steps. With these strides Viṣṇu encompasses the earth, and with his third step he disappears into a realm where none can follow (I.155.4–5). Or he enters into heaven where there is the "wellspring of honey," the source of soma (I.154.5), or the highest cattle-pen (III.55.10). He is therefore the god who is wide-ranging (*urugāyá*) and wide-striding (*urukramá*). The purpose of his strides is to create space and a place for people to live and move (I.155.4, VI.49.13, VII.100.4). This purpose could explain Viṣṇu's close connection

with Indra in the fight with Vṛtra, since Vṛtra represents what confines and hinders, and Viṣṇu's strides what opens and frees. The strides of Viṣṇu in the Ṛgveda anticipate the strides that Viṣṇu takes as Vāmana, the dwarf avatar of classical Hinduism, and also in the middle Vedic literature Viṣṇu as the sacrifice is a dwarf (ŚB I.2.5.5). However, there is no direct evidence that Viṣṇu already has the form of a dwarf in the Ṛgveda.

S. RUDRA

Although Rudra, under his euphemistic epithet Śiva, "the kindly one," has, of course, an extraordinarily great future in classical Hinduism, in the Ṛgveda he has a very circumscribed role, with only three complete hymns dedicated to him. He has two major and complementary characteristics: on the one hand, he is fierce and malevolent, with an often inexplicable anger that needs to be appeased; on the other, he is a healer, who controls the remedies for disease. He is also, as noted above, the father of the Maruts, who are much more prominent in our text.

T. SARASVATĪ AND THE RIVERS

Another divinity with a great future ahead but little prominence in our text is the goddess Sarasvatī. Again the Ṛgveda provides little or no evidence for her later role as patron of learning and the arts, though a number of scholars have attempted to find it. Instead she is celebrated, in the three hymns dedicated to her and in other mentions in the text, simply as a physical river with a powerful flow, which is sometimes destructive but which also provides fecundity with its fructifying waters. Other rivers are also praised in the Ṛgveda, especially the Sindhu in a hymn dedicated to the rivers in general.

U. VĀC "SPEECH"

One last goddess should be mentioned, Vāc or deified Speech (a noun with feminine gender). Although this goddess figures in a number of mythological narratives in the middle Vedic period, and although she ultimately seems to have become conflated with Sarasvatī, thus amplifying the status of both goddesses, in the Ṛgveda she appears as a clear personage very rarely, most prominently in a late hymn (X.125), which is a 1st-person self-praise (*ātmastuti*) spoken by Vāc herself.

VI. Ṛgvedic People and Society

A. ṚGVEDA AS HISTORY

A number of scholars have treated the question of the historical background of the Ṛgveda and to what extent we can extract historical information from the names of kings and peoples, the events they are depicted as participating in, and the place

names where these events are depicted as occurring or where the kings and their retinues are depicted as living. We do not intend to enter into these issues and will simply make global reference to the many works of Michael Witzel (e.g., Witzel 1995a, 1995b), who has been especially active in discussing these questions in recent decades.

We will only note here that the Ṛgveda contains a large number of certain or likely personal names (see Mayrhofer 2003). Besides the poets and their ancestors, many of the names belong to royal patrons and are therefore especially common in dānastutis. Some kings have a presence outside of dānastutis, however; particularly noteworthy are the Tṛtsu or Bharata King Sudās ("Good Giver"), the victor in the famous Battle of the Ten Kings treated in VII.18, whose forces also crossed a formidable barrier of rivers, as depicted in the dialogue hymn III.33, and King Trasadasyu, whose Royal Consecration may form the subject of the dialogue hymn IV.42. Others belong to human enemies of the poet and his group, whose defeat the gods (generally Indra) aid our side in effecting, or to clients of various gods, especially the Aśvins, who receive help from these divine patrons. Needless to say, the "reality" of those named, especially in the last two groups, cannot be ascertained.

B. ĀRYAS, DĀSAS, AND DASYUS

The people of the Ṛgveda refer to themselves as Āryas, which probably meant the "civilized" ones or something similar. Under this term they define their own group as the people who sacrifice to the gods, who adhere to Vedic customs, who speak Indo-Aryan languages, and who in other ways identify themselves with Vedic culture. They also refer to themselves as *mā́nuṣa* and *mānavá*, the "sons of Manu" or the "peoples of Manu," for the legendary Manu (*mánu* simply means "man") was the one who first instituted the sacrifice and was therefore the founder of Vedic religious culture. They also called themselves the "five peoples" (*páñca jánāḥ, carṣaṇáyaḥ*, or *kṛṣṭáyaḥ*), who lived in the "five directions" (*páñca pradíśaḥ*)—the cardinal directions and the center—or in the five lands (*páñca bhū́mā*; cf. Proferes 2007: 62). Corresponding to this world of five peoples in five lands, the Ṛgveda also mentions five major Ārya tribes or tribal federations—the Pūru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, and Druhyu—who can, at one time or another, be allies or enemies of each other. Even these major tribes may not have been stable social units, and they are not the only social groupings mentioned in the Ṛgveda. Including the major tribes, Witzel (1995a: 313) lists around thirty social groups named in the Ṛgveda, but notes that it is not clear which of these were extended families or clans or tribes or confederations.

The primary social units that made up larger tribal units were the *víś*. There has been much discussion about how to characterize the *víś* (cf. Proferes 2007: 15–16). Generally speaking, scholars either see the *víś* as a "clan," which was composed of related lineages, or a "settlement" of a kinship group. The former emphasizes the perceived relation of the people belonging to the *víś*; the latter, their shared

locality. We have translated *víś* as "clan," although our primary intention has not been to adjudicate between these two views but to find a consistent translation. The head of the clan was the *viśpáti*, the "clanlord," who led his clan and represented it within larger social units, such as a tribe. The clan was itself composed of different extended families, themselves led by a *gr̥hápati* or *dámpati*, a "houselord." Sacrificers generally came from the ranks of these clanlords and houselords. Larger social units composed of several clans were led by a *rā́jan*, a "king" or, as others prefer, a "chieftain," who was chosen from among the viśpatis by the viśpatis of the clans that formed these units. These groups of clans then formed parts of larger tribes or confederations, also led by a king. The R̥gvedic *saṃrā́j* or "sovereign king" was likely a king whose rule included other social units that also had their kings. The *saṃrā́j* was differentiated from the *svarā́j* "independent king," who ruled without interference from other lesser or greater rulers. While there is good reason and good evidence to believe that kings were selected by clanlords or lesser kings, there is also evidence for the lineal descent of kings, at least of the kings of major tribal confederations (cf. Witzel 1995a: 330, 336).

The nature of a king's rule was also affected by cycles of settlement patterns. Periods of fixed settlement (*kṣéma*) alternated with periods of movement (*yóga*, lit. "yoking up"). During the former the clans tended their cattle and raised crops, more or less in peace, in more or less fixed habitations. During the latter they traveled into new areas to gain new lands or to take cattle from other clans or tribes, or they confronted others moving into their territories. These two periods of settlement and movement may have been fixed according to the seasons of the year. In periods of mobilization the clans were governed by a king who could lead them in battle. This king was an embodiment of Indra, a war-king, a *svarā́j*, who required obedience from his subjects. During times of settlement the king was an embodiment of Varuṇa or of Mitra and Varuṇa, who maintained the peace among his people. He could be a *saṃrā́j*, who ruled, perhaps more loosely, over other rulers. The "war-king" and the "peace-king" might have been two different people, but more likely these represent two roles that a king might or must play. According to our understanding, in IV.42 King Trasadasyu is both Indra and Varuṇa, the king both in war and in peace.

The Āryas fought among themselves, but their enemies were often groups of non-Āryas, called Dāsas or Dasyus, who may, or may not, have been non-Indo-Aryans. The opposition between Āryas and Dāsas or Dasyus was not an unbridgeable divide. There are many people, clans, and tribes in the Veda who have names without likely Indo-European derivation. Witzel (1999: 359–60) gives a "fairly comprehensive list" of Vedic "tribal and (some) clan names" that includes names from the R̥gveda. Of these he counts twenty-two that are non-Indo-Aryan names. The evidence is rough, but it suggests that at some point in their histories these people had adopted Vedic culture and had become part of the Ārya community. The distinction between Āryas and Dāsas or Dasyus, therefore, was essentially a cultural and political one. The Dāsas and Dasyus were people who had

not adopted or not yet adopted the customs and behaviors of the R̥gvedic Āryas and therefore were not part of the Ārya community. Exactly who the Dāsas and Dasyus were—as opposed to who they were not—is a more difficult problem. They must have been people and cultures either indigenous to South Asia or already in South Asia—from wherever or whenever they may have come—when the carriers of R̥gvedic culture and religion moved into and through the northwest of the subcontinent.

According to the evidence of the R̥gveda the Dasyus are regularly the enemies of the Āryas, and the poets repeatedly ask the gods' help against them. R̥gveda X.22.8 lays out the character of the Dasyu according to the R̥gvedic poets. He is *akarmán* "of non-deeds," that is, he does not perform the sacrificial rites. He is *amantú* "of non-thought" because he does not know the truths formulated in the Vedic hymns and therefore is unable to articulate these truths. He is *anyávrata*, one "whose commandments are other" than the commandments of the gods. And he is *ámānuṣa* "no son of Manu" and therefore one who does not belong to the Vedic peoples. The Dasyus are not only other than the Āryas, they are hostile to the Āryas. The poets accuse them of having cunning tricks or wiles (*māyā́*, IV.16.9, VIII.14.14, X.73.5) that they use against the Āryas, and they call on the gods, especially Indra but also Agni and Soma, to strike the Dasyus down (VI.29.6), drive them off (V.31.7), or blow them away (I.33.9, X.55.8). Such Dasyus are human, although some of them may have been demonized humans or beings on the way to becoming demons.

There is a great degree of overlap between Dasyus and Dāsas, since both names can be used of the same beings (I.103.3, IV.28.4, V.30.9). Like the Dasyus, the Dāsas are also humans and usually they are enemies of the Āryas. Indra destroys them (IV.30.15, 21;VI.20.10, 47.21, X.120.2) and their fortresses (II.20.7, IV.32.10). However, the use of Dāsa in the R̥gveda is more complex than that of Dasyu. Since the greatest enemy of Indra, Vr̥tra, is a Dāsa (I.32.11, II.11.2, IV.18.9) but not a Dasyu, the Dāsas apparently penetrated further into the nonhuman realm as demonic beings. Such a nonhuman Dāsa occurs also in X.99.6, where Indra "subdued the mightily roaring Dāsa with his six eyes and three heads." However, *dāsá* can mean "servant, slave" already in some R̥gvedic passages. According to VIII.56.3, a man named Dasyave Vr̥ka, "Wolf to the Dasyu," has given to the poet "a hundred donkeys," "a hundred wooly ewes, a hundred slaves (*dāsá*), and garlands beyond that" (cf. also VII.86.7, X.62.10). These *dāsá*s were obviously not enemies of the Āryas, at least not as long as they were subordinate to them. The R̥gveda also shows less insistence on the Dāsas' cultural difference from the Āryas than on the Dasyus'—Dāsas are not described as *akarmán, amantú, anyávrata, ámānuṣa*, and the like. However, the poets sharply distinguish between Āryas and Dāsas (V.34.6, VI.25.2, X.86.19) and worry that the Dāsas have wealth that should belong to Āryas (II.12.4). Yet they also can have ties to the Āryas. In VIII.46.32, a dānastuti verse, the poet mentions a wealthy Dāsa named Balbūtha Tarukṣa, from whom he says he received a hundred camels. Although Balbūtha's name is not Indo-Aryan and although he is called a Dāsa, he had apparently employed the poet, presumably to

compose hymns and to sacrifice for him. Therefore, he must have had one foot in Ārya culture, if not quite in the Ārya community.

In summary, the Dasyus and Dāsas are overlapping categories of peoples opposed to the Āryas, and the poets call on the gods to defeat them for the sake of the Āryas. However, sometimes Dāsas may have been rivals to the Āryas or may even have been at the fringes the Ārya community rather than inevitable enemies of Āryas. For a thorough discussion of the attestions of *dásyu, dāsá,* and *dā́sa* in the R̥gveda and later Vedas, see Hale (1986: 146–69). The above summary is very much indebted to Hale's work, but Hale is inclined to see a racial distinction between the Āryas and the Dasyus or Dāsa that is not justified by the evidence.

C. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The R̥gveda is the product of an elite segment of society, and it no doubt reflects only a small part of even elite religious life. For example, the life-cycle rituals that are so important in the late Vedic period, chronicled in the *gr̥hya sūtras*, are only tangentially treated in the R̥gveda, and we get only glimpses of the dharmic prescriptions that later ordered daily life, as preserved in the *dharma sūtra*s of the late Vedic period and the *dharma śāstra*s that followed them. The religious beliefs and practices of the non-elite are completely absent from the text, except perhaps in obscure and slighting references to practices that do not conform to R̥gvedic standards.

Outside of the religious sphere we have almost no direct evidence of social or political organization and very little information about how people, ordinary or elite, spent their days. We learn a little about the various trades plied by members of society, mostly by way of incidental similes or poetic images. Most of what we learn in this sphere is about stock-raising, since the cow and the bull are both such powerful symbols in the poetry. We also learn a bit about the leisure pursuits of the elite, especially dicing and horse racing.

All of this is to say that it is unwise to use the evidence of the hymns uncritically to speculate on Vedic society. Not only does the text concern a very small percentage of the population, but even in that population its focus is very narrow. Moreover, everything we learn is shaped by the pragmatic purpose of the hymns as well as by the poetic sensibilities of their composers. Nonetheless, we can venture some very general remarks about social organization.

There is no evidence in the R̥gveda for an elaborate, much-subdivided, and overarching caste system such as pertains in classical Hinduism. There *is* some evidence in the late R̥gveda for the fourfold division of society into *varṇa*s, the large social classes so prominent in the later legal texts. But even this system seems to be embryonic in the R̥gveda and, both then and later, a social ideal rather than a social reality. The clearest evidence for it is found in the so-called Puruṣasūkta or "Hymn of the Man" (X.90), in which the body parts of the Ur-man correspond to the four varṇas, hierarchically arranged (vs. 12): the *brahmin* is his mouth, the *kṣatriya* (there

called *rājanya*) his arms, the *vaiśya* his thighs, and the *śūdra* is produced from his feet. But this hymn is generally considered to have been a quite late addition to the text, perhaps to provide a charter myth for the varṇa system after it had taken more definite shape. Otherwise, the late R̥gveda provides some evidence for the beginnings of a formal contrast between brahmaṇic and kṣatriyan powers; for example, in the final verses of VIII.36 and VIII.37, which are identical save for *bráhmāṇi* "priestly formulations" in VIII.36.7 and *kṣatrā́ṇi* "lordly powers" in VIII.37.7; the hymn preceding this pair contains a tr̥ca (VIII.35.16–18), in which each of the three verses calls for blessings appropriate to one of the three upper varṇas (though they are not named as such).

The rest of the R̥gveda does attest to a division of labor and complementary and reciprocal relationship between *rā́jan* "kings" (whatever form this kingship took at this period) and the poets and priests who performed their sacrifices and composed the accompanying poetry (as well as the secular royal encomia whose existence we can posit though we have no direct evidence for them [see Jamison 2007: chap. 4, esp. 146–48]). This poet–patron relationship is especially on view in the dānastutis that were already discussed above. The status and pursuits of the "producers" or vaiśyas are barely and glancingly alluded to in the text, primarily in similes and the like.

We might here spare a few words for the creatures who are otherwise invisible in the social and political structures, namely women. As is quite common for ancient societies, we don't know much, but the few female figures that appear in the text tend to be quite vivid. Given their general absence from the R̥gveda, females appear disproportionately as speakers in dialogue hymns—both divine and semi-divine figures such as Indrāṇī, wife of Indra (X.86) and the Apsaras Urvaśī, once married to the mortal Purūravas (X.95), or human or semi-human women such as Lopāmudrā, wife of the legendary seer Agastya (I.179), or Yamī, the first (almost) mortal with her twin Yama (X.10). The females in these hymns are quite outspoken, usually about sex, and their male conversation partners tend to look weak and helpless in comparison. For possible linguistic features of women's speech as represented in the R̥gveda, see Jamison (2008a, 2009b, 2009c).

But none of these female speakers is depicted as a real, contemporary woman, and what we know of that class is extremely limited. Beautiful sexy women are sometimes recorded by the poet as a particularly appealing feature of the gift celebrated in his dānastuti, and Dawn is often compared to everyday women—either good, eager wives or not-so-good, eager courtesans. One must make allowance for male fantasy at this period, as in so many others. Mothers are tenderly described, but in generic fashion, and we also learn something about the contracting and solemnizing of marriage, both in the wedding hymn (X.85) and in the numerous mentions of the wedding of Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, which appears to have been of a Svayaṃvara ("self-choice") type, familiar from later Sanskrit literature, particularly the weddings of Damayantī and Nala and of Draupadī and the Paṇḍava brothers in the Mahābhārata.

The Anukramaṇī attributes a few hymns to females, for example XIII.91 to Apālā Ātreyī and X.39–40 to Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī, but these ascriptions are derived from the personnel depicted in the hymn itself. There is no reason to assume that the poet was female in these cases. A particularly egregious example is the attribution of the very interesting X.109 to Juhū Brahmajāyā, or "Sacrificial Ladle, Wife of Brahma [/ the brahmin]," based on the appearance of both those terms in the text.

Although there is no real evidence for female *poets*, there *is* evidence in the late R̥gveda for women in a ritual role, that is, as Sacrificer's Wife (*patnī*). This is a standard and required role in the classical śrauta ritual of the middle Vedic period (discussed extensively in Jamison 1996a), and it appears to be a ritual innovation, much disputed, in the late R̥gveda (see discussion in Jamison 2011 and forthcoming a and b).

VII. Language and Poetics

A. GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE USE

Sanskrit is an inflectional language with an especially rich morphology, and most of the grammatical information that is carried in English by word order and by separate elements such as prepositions and auxiliary verbs is coded in Sanskrit on the word itself. R̥gvedic poets glory in their grammar and are skillful in exploiting not only the many distinctions it provides but also grammatical ambiguities and neutralizations of grammatical distinctions. Moreover, since basic information, such as the identity of the grammatical subject and object, is coded on the word, the poet is free to use word order for rhetorical purposes, placing particularly significant words in emphatic positions such as initial in the verse line. When possible, we have tried to reproduce these effects, but all too often, given the very different structure of English, the result of a well-intentioned effort to follow the Sanskrit word order is at best awkward and artificial, and at worst unintelligible. This is discussed further in section VIII below.

Even the briefest sketch of Vedic grammar would be out of place here. We refer the interested reader to Jamison (2004b) for a very skeletal account and to any standard Sanskrit reference grammar for more details. Macdonell's *Vedic Grammar for Students* (Macdonell 1916) is admirably clear and informative, and the classic Sanskrit reference grammar is Whitney (1889). However, in some of the hymn introductions we do make reference to certain grammatical facts, and some of these we will mention here. The Sanskrit noun has eight grammatical cases, expressing most of the syntactic relations pertaining in a sentence, including subject (nominative case), direct object (accusative case), possessor (genitive case), and so on. The noun also has three numbers, singular, dual, and plural, and three genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter. The verb is even more complex. Its basic unit is a nine-member grid of three persons (1st [I/we], 2nd [you], 3rd [he, she, it, they]) and three numbers (matching those of the noun) of the subject of the verb form (Table I.1).

TABLE I.1. **Sanskrit Verb Forms.**

I	we two	we (all)
you (sg.) ["thou"]	you two	you (all)
he, she, it	they two	they (all)

This basic unit is deployed in a plethora of tenses and moods, including at least three ways to express the past tense (the imperfect, aorist, and perfect tenses). Of these three, the aorist is often used to express the immediate past (in English, "has [just] done" vs. "did") and is therefore frequently encountered in ritual situations, in which the poet announces a sacrificial act as just completed (like the kindling of the fire) or a poem just composed. The verbal system also has a special category called the injunctive, which has no formal marking for tense or mood and therefore can be employed in a variety of functions—an ambiguity that the poets often exploit.

Such is the structure of the language in general. We should now consider how the poets utilized their language and what stylistic choices they made among the many possibilities afforded them by the grammar. We should first remark that the language we encounter in the R̥gveda was almost surely not the standard everyday idiom of the poets themselves. Instead, they composed in a deliberately archaic and deliberately elevated register appropriate to the poetic tradition they belonged to and the solemn nature and high sacred purpose of their hymns. Such reaching for the archaic and the elevated is common across religious traditions; one need only glance at modern prayer books and liturgies, even those supposedly updated to reflect contemporary language, to encounter the same phenomenon. The problem with regard to the R̥gveda is, of course, that we possess no control sample of the "standard everyday" language of the poets, though occasional forays into a lower register as well as phonological and morphological forms embedded in the text that show developments characteristic of later forms of Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan give us some hints of what everyday language might have been, and the language of the only slightly later text, the Atharvaveda, may be closer (though certainly not identical) to what the poets spoke "at home."

Although most of the R̥gveda is couched in very-high-register language, the poets sometimes, sometimes quite abruptly, slip into what appears to be a colloquial, even slangy, register—a switch that almost always has a dramatic purpose. These passages are especially found in dānastutis, which are often filled with puns, often obscene, and obscure terms, and characterized by "popular" phonological and morphological forms. When women's speech is represented in the text, it also appears to belong to a lower register, and the technical terms of Vedic pastimes like dicing and horse-racing and occupations like stockbreeding and agriculture introduce us to lexical levels different from the high style of praise poetry and again

presumably closer to ordinary language. Not surprisingly, it is harder to determine the meaning and reference of the words in these low-register passages than those in the elevated discourse that generally prevails in the R̥gveda, and many of our translations of such passages are provisional. Insofar as possible we have tried to signal the change in register by using more idiomatic and slangy English. (Needless to say, our translations of these parts will soon be dated. Such is the fate of slang, both now and in antiquity.) For further discussion of low register in the text, see Jamison (2008a, 2009b, 2009c).

The poets' manipulation of language was not limited to change of register. The most significant and salient feature of the poets' relationship to language is their deliberate pursuit of obscurity and complexity. The strong privileging of obscurity is found in all aspects of R̥gvedic poetry, and we will mention only a few aspects here. To begin with mythology, the poets seldom (we would venture to say never) relate a myth fully and in chronological order; instead they shatter the narrative line by ignoring chronology, omitting key plot elements, and obsessively focusing on a few moments, alluding briefly and obliquely to the myth and deliberately failing to identify the actors in the myth. The same is true for ritual: well-known steps in ritual procedure (like the kindling of the fire or the mixing of soma with milk) are shrouded in metaphor and figurative language and do not always appear in their ritual order. The fondness for riddles and enigmas, to be discussed below, places the puzzle-to-be-solved at the heart of the intellectual and poetic enterprise.

And so it is also with their use of language. The poets push their syntax to the limits of intelligibility (and, at least for us, sometimes beyond) by permutations of word order, radically breaking up constituents and scattering their words through a verse, omitting key constituents (like the direct object or even the verb), and violating expected case frames and other grammatical conventions. They delight in confecting variant morphological forms, and the vocabulary they use is simply enormous relative to the size of the text: Grassmann's lexicon of the R̥gveda is a very fat volume, with 1685 pages of lemmata—a giant word-hoard, full of rarities and hapax legomena, slang and colloquialisms. Determining the meaning and reference of R̥gvedic words has always been one of the greatest challenges in Vedic studies, going all the way back to the indigenous lexicographer Yāska in the mid-first millennium BCE. Even words that are continued into later Sanskrit often have radically different values in the R̥gveda from their later representatives. (Especially cogent examples are the resonant terms *dharma(n)* and *brahma(n)*, which cannot be read with their later values.) But many words simply do not appear in later Sanskrit or in Middle-Indo-Aryan. Much help is given by cognates in other Indo-European languages, especially closely related Avestan, and from Indo-Iranian and Indo-European root etymologies. But of course cognates and root etymologies are not always a reliable guide to synchronic semantics, as meaning changes over time and space, and some words are simply isolated, attested only once (the technical term for this is hapax, or more fully hapax legomenon) or only a few times in non-diagnostic contexts. We have often signaled such words in the

introductions to individual hymns, although we generally give at least a provisional translation. Again, the poets clearly revel in their lexical riches, employing what seem like dozens of synonyms and near-synonyms for key concepts (like "shine" or "sing") and seeking out rarities and archaisms.

Why is obscurity so highly prized in the R̥gvedic aesthetic? On the conceptual level it has to do with the audience—or the most important members of the audience—as well as the target of the composition, namely the gods. The aim of the poets is to praise the gods at the sacrifice. But it can't be just any praise, tired repetitions of already hackneyed formulae—for the gods are connoisseurs. They of course already know their own fine qualities and formidable deeds, and they have attended countless sacrifices where these have been recounted. In order to ensure that the gods will come, and keep coming, to *our* sacrifice, not that of some competing sacrificer, we have to trick out the same underlying material—"you are great, and your deeds and gifts are great"—in ever novel fashion, with imagery and turns of phrase to embellish and transform the same underlying message. For, as prose texts not too much later than the R̥gveda regularly say, "the gods love the obscure" (or literally, what is "out of sight"). Thus it is the gods' taste for the recondite that shapes the humans' poetic products. The poets regularly boast that they are producing "a new hymn"—for example, in the felicitous phrasing of III.31.19, "I make new (the hymn) born of old" (*návyaṃ kr̥ṇomi…purājā́m*). This statement indirectly draws attention to another reason for the prizing of obscurity: the poets are working in an old tradition, and each poet takes pride in making something new using inherited techniques.

It is the "born of old" feature that gives the answer to a question we have only implicitly posed: if the poets are pushing their language to the very limits, how can it be intelligible? It is because of the very stereotyped and limited nature of the subject matter and the shared universe of discourse among the poets, the human audience, and the putative divine audience. Everyone knows the great deeds of Indra or the step-by-step procedure for purifying the soma juice, and they can recognize their plain outlines under the fancy-dress embellishments and recherché conceits in which the poet has clothed them. The audience can complete a truncated phrase with the proper missing word because the full phrase is always in their heads. They can unscramble the syntax and rechronologize the narrative and identify the mythic actors indicated only by masking pronouns. A wider range of poetic subjects would in fact have constrained the poets' verbal exuberance, because they could not so fully have relied on the unconsciously shared background knowledge of their hearers. For us this background knowledge is hard and consciously won and will be forever incomplete, but we must try to read the poems with an awareness of the performance context in which they would have been received.

B. HYMN TYPES AND STRUCTURING DEVICES

There is no single, universally applicable template to which all, or even most, R̥gvedic hymns conform. At best we can state the uselessly vague obvious: most

hymns praise a god or gods, often with reference to their attributes and deeds, and explicitly or implicitly request goods and services from the divinities in return for this praise. This exchange is often effected during the sacrifice at which we hope they are present, either because they are part of the sacrificial paraphernalia (like Agni and Soma) or have come as invited guests. Within these extremely loose parameters, the poets take many different approaches, often emphasizing one element of the overall program while backgrounding or ignoring others. Indeed sometimes even the "praise" portion of the overall genre "praise hymn" seems to have been entirely elided. Because of the multifarious nature of the hymns, we have provided an introduction to each individual hymn, describing its particular preoccupations and structures and its particular deployment of shared tropes and themes. In what follows here, we will first just pick out a few especially common tropes that can dominate single hymns—this is a representative, not exhaustive selection. We will then discuss formal devices that provide structure to whole hymns. Our underlying assumption throughout is that hymns should be approached *as hymns*, not as mere unordered collections of loosely linked verses, and that it behooves the investigator to seek structure and coherence even when the hymn seems on the surface to lack them.

In hymns that do roughly conform to the sacrificial model just outlined, we can single out two salient aspects, which sometimes carry all or most of an entire hymn: the invitation and the journey. Many hymns begin with an invitation to the god to come to our sacrifice, and some hymns make this invitation the focus of the whole. Many other hymns focus on the god's journey to the sacrifice (e.g., VII.24)—the hitching up of horses and chariot, the progress from heaven through the midspace and across the earth, often passing over other sacrificers on the way (see, e.g., III.35). The epiphany of the god, his arrival at our ritual ground, can be the climax of the hymn (for a superb example of this genre, see the Marut hymn I.88). Not surprisingly, the invitation and the journey are often combined in a single hymn.

The progress through the sacrifice, itself a kind of journey, is also a frequent organizational device. Sometimes this organization is quite precise, as in the hymns that follow an ordered series of oblations, like the Praügaśastra (I.2–3), the R̥tugrahas (I.15, II.36–37), or, especially, the Āprī litany of the Animal Sacrifice, ten versions of which are found scattered through the R̥gveda. More often the ritual progress is less formalized—for instance, the dawn sacrifice, first signaled by the approach of the goddess Dawn, the rising of the sun, and the kindling of the ritual fire, followed by the arrival of the gods who receive the offerings at the Morning Pressing, especially Vāyu, Indra, and the Aśvins, and the distribution of the priestly gifts or dakṣiṇās (see, e.g., VII.78).

A favored verbal conundrum, the riddle, not infrequently furnishes the subject matter for whole hymns, in which each verse provides a puzzle, to which the answer may or may not be given within the verse itself. The most famous example of this is I.164, an All God hymn frequently referred to as "the riddle hymn," but many other hymns have the same basic structure—for example, "the weapon hymn" (VI.75)

and the delightful All God hymn VIII.29. Numerology is often an important part of these riddle hymns. Riddle hymns are generally formally structured as lists (see below).

A number of hymns, especially, although not exclusively, late hymns, reflect on the nature or performance of the ritual and the functions of poets and priests. The Puruṣasūkta just mentioned anticipates the interpretations of the sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇas, for the "man" whose parts become the world represents the sacrificial offering (X.90.6) or the sacrifice itself (cf. X.90.7). A few hymns (e.g., IV.5, VI.9) take as their subject the poet's meditation on the craft of poetry and on his acquisition of it, and R̥gveda X.129 links the creativity of poets to the creation of the world. Again anticipating comparable discussion in the Brāhmaṇas, still other hymns enter into debates about the performance of the sacrifice. In telling the story of Agastya, the Maruts, and Indra, for example, R̥igveda X.165, 170, and 171 appear to defend traditions that favor offering soma to both Indra and the Maruts at the Midday Pressing instead of to Indra alone as some traditions held. Likewise, R̥igveda X.109 provides justification for including the Sacrificer's Wife in the sacrificial performance and thereby defends against critics of her inclusion, such as the poet of VIII.33. Although later employed in the ritual, such hymns apparently had a meta-ritual function and were probably composed for an extra-ritual context.

Another famous category of R̥gvedic hymns is the dialogue or ākhyāna type, already mentioned above, in which two or more speakers, generally divine or semi-divine, trade verses with each other, often in a fraught or agonistic fashion. Generally one of the speakers is a female, and sexual tension is on display—as in the dialogue between the legendary seer Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā (I.179), the twins and first humans Yama and Yamī (X.10), or the three-way discussion among Indra, his wife Indrāṇī, and a monkey (the Vr̥ṣākapi hymn, X.86).

Such are a few of the *thematic* organizing principles of R̥gvedic hymns. At least equally important are various *formal* means of organizing hymns or parts of hymns. As one of us has treated this at some length in several publications (see especially Jamison 2007: chap. 2; also 2004a, 2006), we will provide relatively brief discussion here.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to impose structure is by repetition, a procedure that the poets constantly employ. It can be as straightforward as repeating the same word (often a personal pronoun such as "you" or the name or epithet of a god) at the beginning of every verse (e.g., forms of the 2nd sg. *tvám* in II.1); Sanskrit grammar facilitates such patterned repetition because its elaborate case system allows flexible word order, and therefore whatever their grammatical function, key words can be positioned in initial position. The poets often introduce complications into their repetitive schemata. Sometimes a repetitive pattern takes awhile to become established in a hymn, with the first few verses providing several variants that settle down into a frozen pattern somewhat later (see, e.g., I.112); conversely, strict repetition earlier in the hymn may loosen up in the last verses (e.g., II.1, in its final verses 15–16). Moreover, many cases of repetition consist not of a

single repeated word, but of several (such is actually the case with II.1, where the pronoun *tvám* is followed by vocative *agne*), and the pattern may be established on the basis of grammatical *categories*, not simply words (e.g., PREVERB PRONOUN...).

Mention should also be made here of refrains. In some hymns every verse ends with a repeated phrase, which is often the length of a full pāda (e.g., III.55), a hemistich, or even longer (see VIII.36, in which only the first pāda of a six-pāda verse contains new material; similarly VIII.37 and to a lesser extent VIII.35), but can be shorter (e.g., the famous refrain of II.12 "he, o peoples, is Indra," which occupies the last [post-caesura] six syllables of a triṣṭubh line). Sometimes the refrain is syntactically integrated into the verse in some parts of the hymn and not in others (e.g., I.96). Sometimes some or all subdivisions of the hymn have refrains; for example, in the tr̥ca hymn VIII.12 the last four syllables of the final pāda of each verse form a refrain, syntactically integrated in the verse, and each tr̥ca has a different refrain. (In the translations we will generally mark refrains with a preceding dash.) A special type of refrain is the family or clan signature: in some of the Family Books many of the hymns (in the right meter) end with a pāda that marks the hymn as a product of that bardic family—for instance, the Gr̥tsamada refrain of Maṇḍala II, "May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes," found at the end of most, though not all, of the trimeter hymns of that book.

In addition to repetition of a single word or phrase in every verse, or almost every verse, repetitions can knit one verse to another in a chain, a procedure we might call concatenative repetition. There a word or phrase from one verse will be repeated in the next verse; then a different word from that verse will be repeated in the following one, and so on through the hymn (see, e.g., I.85, VI.55, X.84).

As was noted above at the mention of riddles, hymns are frequently structured as lists, with each verse representing a separate item in the list. This structural principle is well suited to All God hymns, many of which treat a series of gods, one per verse (see, e.g., VI.49). Another common application of the list model is in the recounting of a series of divine deeds. A number of Aśvin hymns have this shape, with each verse treating a different (and often quite obscure) rescue or kindly act for a series of named persons (e.g., the Aśvin hymns of Kakṣīvant, I.116–119). Many list hymns are reinforced, their list shape called attention to, by syntactic parallelism and by repetition. For example, the famous Indra hymn II.12 consists of a series of definitional relative clauses ("[he] who. . . ") recounting deeds and attributes of Indra, with each verse ending with a main clause refrain: *sá janāsa índraḥ* "he, o peoples, is Indra." A list by itself is undramatic and has no built-in trajectory toward climax, but the R̥gvedic poets are adept at finding ways to inject forward momentum into the static list pattern. For example, VIII.29, already mentioned, is a riddle hymn in which each verse refers to a different god or gods; the list builds on increasing numbers, from "one" (six verses) to "two" (two verses) to "some" (one verse), by way of "three" (once explicitly, once implicitly). The rising number leads toward climax, while the strict placement of each number in second position in the verse provides a rigid list skeleton.

A different kind of repetition is found in the well-known and often discussed phenomenon of ring composition (see, e.g., Watkins 1995: 33–37 and passim, with further literature). In ring composition the beginning and end of a poem or of a unified section therein is marked by repeating at the end, either verbatim or, more usually in the R̥gveda, a variation on, material found at the beginning. In the R̥gveda this generally involves the reappearance of lexical items or derivational variants of them, or phrases with partial agreement. For example, in the Agni hymn I.59, verse 1 contains the phrase *víśve amŕ̥tāḥ* "all the immortals" while the last verse (7) describes Agni with the *bahuvrīhi* compound *viśvákr̥ṣṭiḥ* "belonging to all (human) communities." The repetition of *víśva-* "all" provides the ring, and the contrastive nouns it modifies (immortals, [human] communities) express Agni's role as mediator between gods and men. The word *víśva-* is not otherwise found in the hymn, *except* in the derivative *vaiśvānará*, an epithet of Agni meaning "belonging to all men," a form of which occurs in every verse. The ring thus reinforces the message implicit in the epithet. Ring composition frequently demarcates smaller segments in a larger hymn, and paying attention to these clues often allows us to make structural sense of apparently sprawling hymns.

The term "ring composition" focuses attention on the beginning and end of the section demarcated, but a particularly elaborate form of ring composition instead defines and focuses on the center of the section. We call this the "omphalos" (navel) structure (see Jamison 2004a as well as 2007: 80–89). Here a series of concentric outer and inner rings isolate the middle verse or verses, which contain the mystery or the message of the hymn and are often phrased in mystical and complex fashion. Good examples of omphalos hymns include the famous cosmogonic hymn X.129 (see Brereton 1999), enigmatic compositions like I.105 and X.28, dramatic presentations like the Vasiṣṭha-Varuṇa hymn VII.86, and hymns like VII.76 whose content is relatively conventional but which nonetheless show formal omphalos structure. Omphalos structure is also prominent in the Old Avestan Gāthās and has been more discussed there (though not by that term) than the corresponding phenomenon in the R̥gveda (see Jamison 2007: 86–89 with references).

We might make brief mention here of initial and final verses as especially privileged sites in the architecture of a hymn, though they are not "structuring devices" per se. The first verse often poses a problem or sets the theme that the rest of the hymn will seek to work out. Probably the most famous Indra hymn, I.32, begins *índrasya nú vīryā̀ṇi prá vocam* "Now I shall proclaim the heroic deeds of Indra," after which the poet does just that—though it must be admitted that he only relates one of them, the Vr̥tra battle. Final verses can be of two types, integral to the hymn or extra-hymnic. The latter includes the clan refrains discussed above. A different type of extra-hymnic verse is what we might call the meta-summary. The poet often ends his hymn with an announcement of what he has just done, often expressed in the aorist of the immediate past and breaking the mood of immersion in the divine world. For example, the final verse of the exquisitely crafted Indra hymn I.61, which

is full of praise for Indra's deeds and attributes, begins with the brisk hemistich, "Thus have the Gotamas [the poet's poetic clan] made you sacred formulations for the 'Fallow-bay-yoking' (oblation),... o Indra." The sacrifice is complete, their job is done, and they point out their achievement to the god to spur his benevolence as they return to the mundane world. Final verses that are integral to the body of the hymn often subtly break patterns established earlier in the hymn to bring the composition to a climax. Such for example is the final verse (10) of VIII.29, a hymn mentioned several times above. Other examples are discussed in Jamison (2007: 79–80 and passim).

One last technique to be mentioned, "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006), is not a structuring device but a method for producing forward momentum. The poet sets a problem—lexical, syntactic, or thematic—earlier in the hymn and then "repairs" this problem later in the hymn by substituting the expected word, syntactic construction, or thematic element for the problematic one. The audience is thus first put off-balance by a disturbance in the poetry and then rebalanced when the superficial solecism is fixed. An audience used to this type of repair will build expectations that propel them through the poem.

C. IMAGERY, METAPHORS, AND SIMILES

The Ṛgveda is rich in imagery: the procedures of sacrifice, the exploits of the gods, the activities of men, and the elements and functioning of the cosmos are constantly presented in images of *something else*, images based on similarity and parallelism. On the formal level by far the most common way of expressing these images is in a simile—the most common poetic device in the Ṛgveda, as it is in Classical Sanskrit poetry. Although to Indologists the dominance of the simile may seem too predictable to be worth noting, in fact this is one of the features of Ṛgvedic style that looks forward to the classical era, and seems to represent something of a break from the stylistic parameters of the poetic tradition from which Ṛgvedic practice emerged. The Avesta contains very few similes—none in the Old Avestan Gāthās to which the Ṛgveda is otherwise so akin—and the so-called "Homeric simile" of ancient Greek epic, with its elaborately imagined world expressed in verb phrases, is structurally very different from the Sanskrit simile.

Both in Vedic and in Classical Sanskrit poetry the simile is essentially nominal: that is, in a syntactic structure nominal elements are compared with each other, while the verb is held constant. An English example would be "Indra attacked the enemy, like a lion a sheep," where the verb "attack" serves for both frame and simile, while Indra=lion and enemy=sheep provide the comparisons. In a case language like Sanskrit both "Indra" and "lion" will be coded as nominative case, and "enemy" and "sheep" as accusative. Neither Vedic nor Classical Sanskrit regularly has similes of the type "Indra attacked the enemy, as a lion devours a sheep," with two different clauses constituting the comparison and a difference in verb. The "like" of the English example has overt expression in Sanskrit as well: by *iva* or *ná*

in the Ṛgveda, and just *iva* in Classical Sanskrit. For further on the structure of the simile and the ways that Ṛgvedic poets exploit it, see Jamison (1982).

Although the simile is ubiquitous in the Ṛgveda, it is not the only vehicle of imagery in the text. Implicit identifications of disparate elements are another inescapable stylistic feature, and, as was discussed above, regularly recurring identifications (bandhus)—the fire as sun, the chariot as sacrifice, and so forth—provide the conceptual structure of the Vedic cosmos. Thus, poetic style coincides here with the shared notions of the world that shape "the Vedic mind." However, in making identifications the poets do not confine themselves to these shared and stable associations, but often make bold and superficially puzzling equations. Decoding the shared features that allow such equations to be made is one of the intellectual challenges that the poets posed to their own audience and that engages us, and often eludes us, to this day.

Although the poetic foundation on which the Ṛgveda rests was an ancient one, the imagery of its poems comes from the immediate world of its poets. As already remarked, the Ṛgveda is fundamentally a collection for the soma rite in which Indra is the principal deity. Indra is a warrior, and therefore images of battle, war, contest, and conflict provide the background for a great many Ṛgvedic hymns. In the IXth book, for example, the ritual process of creating soma can represent a war campaign by King Soma. The dripping of soma as it is pressed is the beginning of Soma's attack or raid. The flow of soma over the woolen filter and into the soma vessels is the destruction of Soma's enemies. With the mixing of soma with milk, Soma wins cows and other goods and distributes them to his subjects, who are the sacrificers (cf. Oberlies 1999: 167–206).

Other items associated with war and periods of mobilization also loom large in the poems, perhaps none more than the chariot. The chariot was one of the most visible cultural symbols of the Āryas, for it was likely unique to them among the peoples of ancient South Asia, and it was critical to their success in battle and their mobility. In Ṛgvedic poetry the chariot becomes the hymn that travels to the gods or the sacrifice that brings the gods (II.18.1). When they perform the ritual or compose the hymns, priests become the fashioners of the chariot (I.61.4, V.2.11), and just as a chariot brings booty from war or a winning chariot the prize of a race, the sacrifice carries goods from the gods to humans (X.53.7). In I.129.1 Indra is asked to lead a chariot that is both an actual, racing chariot and a metaphorical chariot, the sacrifice. The chariot is also the vehicle of the gods, by which they come to the sacrifice. Distinctive animals pull the chariots of different gods: the two fallow bay horses of Indra, the dappled mares of the Maruts, the mares of the Sun, the ruddy cattle of Dawn, the goats of Pūṣan.

More abstractly, the imagery of war is also implicit in the frequent symbols of expansion and confinement. This imagery is most evident in the principal Indra stories. Vṛtra represents what hinders and blocks, and when Indra kills Vṛtra, he shows himself to be the power that can destroy any other obstacles to life and prosperity. The Vala cave enclosed and entrapped the cattle, and Indra must break open

Vala to free the cows, the dawns, and the light. Finding open and well-watered pasture lands was essential for the Āryas, since their cattle, horses, and other livestock depended on them. The second half of IX.113 is a poetic vision of heaven, where there is "inexhaustible light" (7) and "youthfully exuberant waters" (8), where one moves "following one's desire" (9), and where there is "independence and satisfaction" (10). It is the heavenly vision of a pastoral people, longing for a place of freedom and abundance.

Pastoral imagery dominates R̥gvedic poetry at many turns. Cows are everywhere, especially as the symbols and substance of wealth. The attention of the gods, which will bring rewards to humans, is a cow (II.32.3), and rain is milk from heaven (V.63.5). In II.34.8 the Maruts are compared to a cow, since they "swell" with rain, the way cows swell with milk. In VI.45.7 Indra, as the god who inspires poetic formulations, is a cow whose milk is the hymns. Or again, in VIII.1.10 Indra is both the milker of the cow and the cow whose milk is "refreshment" for sacrificers. Speech is a cow that gives the forms of speech as her milk in VIII.110.10, and in X.64.12 the insight that the gods have given the poet should swell like a cow with milk. VI.48.11–13 combines several images of the cow, beginning with an actual cow, whose milk is the milk that is mixed with soma but including also the cow that represents poetic inspiration and prosperity. In X.133.7 prosperity brought by the gods is a cow giving her milk "in a thousand streams." The dawns, which are linked with the dakṣiṇā, the sacrificial reward, and with riches more generally, are cows (IV.1.16, 52.2–4).

While the poets have particular fondness for cows, male animals too figure significantly in the hymns. Bulls and buffaloes embody strength and virility, and therefore they represent mighty gods, potent sacrifice, and strong men. Agni is a bull with a strong neck (V.2.12), horns (V.1.8), and a powerful bellow (X.8.1). In V.40.1–4 the bull-like pressing stone and bull-like soma are prepared so that the bull Indra will join together with his bulls, the Maruts. Indra is "the bull overcoming the powerful, the tempestuous king, smasher of Vr̥tra, soma-drinker" (vs. 4). Parjanya, the Thunderstorm, roars like a bull (V.83.1), has the powers of bull (vs. 2), and pours his fertilizing streams as a "bullish stallion" (vs. 6). Indeed, anything associated with their ideal of masculinity is likely to be bull-like for the R̥gvedic poets.

The cultural role of horses—racehorses and warhorses—was obviously central to the Āryas and, as a result, so was their poetic role. Agni is praised like a steed (III.22.1), for he is a horse that brings rewards (I.27.1). When he is kindled, he is a hungry horse, which breaks free of his enclosure (VII.3.2). Soma is a racehorse groomed by the fingers of the priests and running over the woolen filter (IX.6.3, 5; cf. 13.6). The waters too are like racehorses that should run forever (IV.3.12). A sacrificer harnesses himself to the sacrifice like a horse (V.46.1), and the sacrifice is brought to success like a horse (IV.10.1). The significance of the horse is perhaps most obvious in the Dadhikrāvan hymns, IV.38–40. Dadhikrāvan was likely the actual horse of King Trasadasyu, but Dadhikrāvan also represents the rule of the Pūrus, the tribe to whom Trasadasyu belonged, and the sun, which can represent

the king. Similarly, in X.178, Tārkṣya is a protective deity of chariot drivers and perhaps a deified racehorse himself.

Although the poets are focused on pastoral life and the herd animals they know best, wild animals also occasionally appear in Ṛgvedic hymns (see Jamison 2008b). Birds are frequently mentioned (I.164.21; X.80.5, 123.6), especially since the gods fly like birds (I.166.10). Unlike other birds, the falcon is not only fast but also can be trained. Mythologically the falcon is particularly significant, since it brought the soma from heaven to Manu (IX.48.4, IV.26–27). The wolf is a recurring symbol of lurking danger (I.42.2, 105.11, 18, 120.7; II.28.10), as is the snake (VII.38.7). The most dangerous creature of all is Vṛtra, who is a gigantic cobra (I.32). More benignly, the inseparable Aśvins are compared to a pair of *cakravāka* ducks (II.39.3), and in I.64 the Maruts are not only bulls and buffaloes, but they also roar like lions and devour trees like elephants. Perhaps the broadest array of animals appears in X.28, which is built around various animal fables (also Jamison 2008b).

Various human pursuits play significant roles in poetic imagery. The poets frequently mention weaving (e.g., I.115.4), which is similar to the intricate patterns of hymn composition and sacrifice (VI.9.2–3, X.101.2, 130). This is an inherited Indo-European trope. Given the pastoral symbolism elsewhere, it is not surprising that cattle-tending is a major source of poetic imagery. Indra is like a herdsman who separates his flocks from those of others (V.31.1; cf. VI.19.3). The poet too can be a herdsman driving his praise to Indra (VI.49.12). Or we have the reverse image: in VII.18.10 enemies run helter-skelter like cows without a herdsman. In addition to animal husbandry, the Āryas also raised crops, such as barley, but agricultural imagery does not figure much in the Ṛgvedic poetry. Again, the reason may be the connection of the soma rite to Indra and to the period of mobilization (*yóga*). In the period of settlement (*kṣéma*), agriculture would have had a larger role.

D. RIDDLES

Much of the Ṛgveda is enigmatic, not only because of our distance from the time of its creation, but also because the poets meant it to be enigmatic. They valued knowledge, especially the knowledge of the hidden connections (the bandhus discussed above) between the visible world, the divine world, and the realm of ritual. They embedded that knowledge in hymns that were stylistically tight and elliptical, expressively oblique, and lexically resonant. As a result, many hymns of the Ṛgveda can appear to us as riddles. However, there are also hymns purposefully composed to cloak their subjects or to withhold them until late in the hymn. In the later Veda the ability to solve the riddles they pose became a formalized demonstration of the knowledge of the priests taking part in the sacrifice. In the Ṛgveda the riddle hymns challenged the interpretive ability of their hearers and demonstrated the cleverness of their poets.

One kind of riddle hymn is represented by V.47. Through its first six verses, it describes various deities but does not name them. The descriptions point toward various gods, but never so plainly that hearers could be sure of their interpretations. At the very end of the hymn, in its last verse, the poet twists his strategy and in the very first pāda names the gods he addresses, gods who may or may not be among those he described earlier. The clarity of that last verse throws into greater relief the difficulty of the preceding verses. The poet of VIII.29 uses exactly the reverse strategy. This is a list hymn, in which each of its verses identifies a god or gods by attributes or behavior, but not by name. In this hymn, however, the identity of the gods it describes is not mysterious at all—or is not until the last verse. At that point, when the confidence of hearers to interpret the hymn would be greatest, the poet presents a real riddle, in which the identity of the subject is not at all clear. In III.55 the riddle of the identity of the gods described in its verses points toward an even deeper mystery. This mystery is laid out in its refrain: it is that the many gods share a single lordship (*asuratvám ékam*).

Other poets treat the sacrifice as a mystery. In X.114 the poet describes the constituents of the sacrifice in symbols that make the identification of those constituents difficult or impossible. It leaves the sense that the sacrifice can be penetrated only so far, that it is beyond full understanding, except, perhaps, for poets who create such hymns. Another characteristic of X.114 is that each of its verses contains a number—small numbers at the beginning (2, 3, 4, 1), larger numbers toward the end, and an ironic plural of the word for "one," *éke* "such ones," in the last verse. Other hymns employ numerical riddles, in which a number is key to their solution, if there is a solution. One of the most obscure hymns in the R̥gveda is X.27. Verse 15 describes the convergence of numbered groups of heroes, none of whom are identified. There are seven who come from the south, eight from the north, nine from the west, and ten from the east, but we are left to puzzle about the significance of these numbers and directions.

Perhaps the most famous riddle hymn in the R̥gveda is I.164, a very long poem (52 verses, one of the longest hymns in the R̥gveda) that moves in different directions as it unfolds. The hymn makes both implicit and explicit reference to Vedic ritual, including rites other than the soma ritual. In referring to these rites, the hymn suggests hidden links between ritual objects and acts, realities and processes of the natural world, and constituents and functions of the human body. These hidden connections continue to be hidden, for while we can see the general pattern of the hymn, the interpretation of its specific elements often remains difficult, and many competing solutions have been offered. This is, of course, often the case with these riddle hymns.

E. METRICS

The most conspicuous and ubiquitous formal feature of the R̥gveda is meter. The hymns are composed in a variety of meters, but all of the meters are *syllable-counting*

and *quantitative*. That is, they consist of lines containing a fixed number of syllables, arranged in patterns of "heavy" and "light" syllables (the "quantity" referred to by the term "quantitative"). Heavy syllables contain a long vowel (a class that includes *e* and *o*) or diphthong or a short vowel followed by two consonants (which need not belong to the same word) and are symbolized in Western analysis by a macron (¯). Light syllables contain a short vowel followed by, at most, a single consonant and are symbolized by a breve (˘). (Aspirated consonants [those written with two roman letters, the second of which is *h*, e.g., *th*] count as single consonants.) The final syllable of a line is metrically indifferent and symbolized by x. The distinction between heavy and light metrical syllables simply formally enshrines patterns inherent in the language itself, where various linguistic processes are sensitive to distinction in syllable weight and the difference between short and long vowels is lexically and morphologically crucial.

This type of metrical structure was inherited from the Indo-European poetic tradition, most clearly evident in ancient Greek meter, especially the Aeolic meters utilized by Sappho and Alcaeus, which are also syllable-counting and quantitative; these Aeolic meters have long been considered cognate to Vedic meter. The meter of the Old Avestan Gāthās is also closely akin: though the quantitative aspect has been lost, Gāthic lines have a fixed number of syllables.

R̥gvedic meter is also identical in its structural principles to most of the meters encountered in Epic and Classical Sanskrit (with the exception of the *ārya* and related types). The major difference between Vedic meter and Classical Sanskrit meter has to do with the regulation of quantities. In the earlier parts of the line R̥gvedic meter has relatively unfixed quantities; it is only toward the end of a line (the cadence) that the quantity of each syllable is fixed (especially in trimeter meter, on which see below). By contrast, most Classical Sanskrit literary meters regulate the quantity of each syllable in the line; in other words, the relative flexibility of R̥gvedic meter has become frozen. The exception is the eight-syllable epic anuṣṭubh, or so-called "*śloka*" meter—the overwhelmingly predominant meter in the two great epics and the workhorse meter of non-literary Classical Sanskrit verse texts such as Manu's lawcode—whose quantities are precisely fixed only in the second half of each line.

R̥gvedic meters are generally divided into "dimeter" and "trimeter" types. The former consists of eight-syllable lines, which can be conveniently considered to consist of two equal segments, with the second half tending more toward fixed quantities, generally in an iambic pattern. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is no fixed caesura (word-break) in dimeter meter, and even the four cadential syllables are not rigidly fixed in quantity. Trimeter meter is more complex. It generally consists of lines of either eleven or twelve syllables (triṣṭubh or jagatī respectively), characterized not only by a fixed cadential sequence of four (triṣṭubh) or five (jagatī) syllables but also by a strong caesura after the first four or five syllables in the line. The caesura and the cadence thus effectively divide the line into three parts—the opening (the first 4–5 syllables before the caesura), the "break" (the 2–3 syllables following the caesura), and the cadence.

Examples of the three most common types of lines, dimeter, trimeter (triṣṭubh), and trimeter (jagatī) follow, with heavy and light syllable scansion given below the text. We have provided two examples each for the trimeter lines, one with four-syllable opening and three-syllable break, one with five-syllable opening and two-syllable break.

Dimeter

eight-syllable dimeter
I.1.1a agním īḻe puróhitam
- ˘ - - ˘ - ˘ x

Note the iambic rhythm of the last 4 syllables.

Trimeter

Trimeter cadences:

triṣṭubh: - ˘ - x
jagatī: - ˘ - ˘ x

Note that twelve-syllable jagatī can be seen as a one-syllable extension of triṣṭubh, with an extra light syllable inserted right before the end, resulting in a five-syllable cadence. The structure of the rest of the line is the same.

eleven-syllable trimeter: triṣṭubh—opening of four
I.32.1a índrasya nú vīrıyāṇi prá vocam
- - ˘ ˘ | - ˘ - - ˘ - x

The obligatory caesura (word break) after the opening is marked by a slash; the break is three syllables (- ˘ -) and is *not* followed by a caesura, while the cadence is the proper triṣṭubh one (- ˘ - x).

eleven-syllable trimeter: triṣṭubh—opening of five
I.32.1b yā́ni cakā́ra prathamā́ni vajrī́
- ˘ ˘ - - | ˘ ˘ - ˘ - x

Note that the rhythms of the openings of the two triṣṭubh lines are quite distinct. Here the break is two syllables (˘ ˘), and the cadence the same as the previous line.

twelve-syllable trimeter: jagatī—opening of four
II.1.16b ágne rātím upasr̥jánti sūráyaḥ
- - - ˘ | ˘ ˘ ˘ - ˘ - ˘ x

The opening is different from either of the triṣṭubh openings above; the break is three shorts (˘ ˘ ˘), unlike the short/long/short (- ˘ -) three-syllable break of the quoted triṣṭubh line. The cadence is the standard jagatī five-syllable one (- ˘ - ˘ x).

twelve-syllable trimeter: jagatī—opening of five
II.1.16c asmā́ñ ca tā́ṃś ca prá hí néṣi vásya ā́
- - ˘ - - | ˘ ˘ - ˘ - ˘ x

Yet another opening pattern. The two-syllable (˘ ˘) break is identical to that of the triṣṭubh with opening of five, as shorter breaks have fewer possible patterns. The cadence is the standard jagatī cadence. Note that though there happens to be a word break between the break and the cadence in this line, it is not an obligatory one, and in fact none of the other three trimeter lines quoted shows a word break at this position.

The *lines* just described are called pādas, a term we will employ throughout this work. A R̥gvedic *verse* (*r̥c*) consists of a group of pādas, generally three or four, though meters with fewer than three pādas or more than four are also found. Lower-case roman letters are used to refer to the pādas in a verse (so, e.g., "5b" will refer to the second pāda in the fifth verse of a hymn). Again, we will regularly use this shorthand in identifying lines. There is another significant division within the verse: the hemistich or half-verse. In four-pāda verses this consists of two two-pāda units; in three-pāda verse, the first two pādas are considered the hemistich, with a single pāda following.

The most common dimeter meter is gāyatrī, a collection of three eight-syllable pādas. Approximately one quarter of the R̥gveda is composed in this meter. The other common dimeter meter is anuṣṭubh, which contains four such eight-syllable lines and is the ancestor of the Epic and Classical śloka mentioned above. The most common trimeter meter, in fact the most common meter in the R̥gveda, is triṣṭubh, which accounts for approximately 40% of the text. It consists of four eleven-syllable pādas, while jagatī likewise consists of four pādas, though of twelve syllables each. Jagatī is the third most common meter, after triṣṭubh and gāyatrī. Besides these mono-type meters, some hymns are composed in what are referred to in general as "mixed-lyric meters," whose verses consist of combinations of eight- and twelve-syllable pādas. There are a number of different combinations, each with a different name. (For details, see especially the table of meters in van Nooten and Holland 1994, referred to below.)

The details just given are not relevant only to professional metricians, for the rhetoric and semantic structure of the R̥gveda are strongly driven and shaped by meter. Syntactic constituents often occupy single pādas, for example, and metrical boundaries (the beginning and end of the line, as well as the position immediately after the caesura) are favored sites for positioning emphatic elements. The hemistich is a particularly salient unit, dividing the verse into syntactic and semantic halves. In fact, we have discovered that it is almost always possible, and generally desirable, to render the hemistich division in English—that is, to translate the first half and the second half of the verse as separate units. This is reflected in the physical layout of our translation, with the second hemistich starting a new line. It is remarkable how faithful it is possible to be to the Sanskrit hemistichs without significantly compromising the English. (The hemistich division is less important and more often syntactically breached in gāyatrī, since the division results in uneven parts: two pādas followed by one, but even in gāyatrī the third pāda is often independent of the first two.)

The verse is the most significant unit in a R̥gvedic hymn—hence the name R̥g-veda, or Veda of verses (*r̥c*). It is almost always a self-contained syntactic construction, and even when that construction is not entirely independent syntactically (e.g., when it is a relative clause, dependent on a main clause in a verse following or preceding), it will be internally unified. There are almost no examples of syntactic enjambment between verses. This focus on the internal unity and syntactic independence of the verse is continued in later Sanskrit poetry, where it reaches its defining limit in so-called *muktaka* verses or single-verse poems.

Nonetheless, some hymns are structured into larger groupings of two to three verses, which are sometimes referred to as "strophes." The tr̥ca or "triplet" is the most common such grouping, consisting of three verses, generally in gāyatrī, though other meters are also found. Sometimes the tr̥ca unit is strongly defined by shared lexicon or a shared refrain, or by parallel syntactic structures, or by a common theme; other tr̥cas have only the faintest signs of unity in rhetoric or content. Quite long hymns can be built from these three-verse units, which are especially common in Maṇḍala VIII and, as Oldenberg argued (1888: 119–40), were the special province of the Udgātar (singer) priest. Many of these strophes were borrowed into the Sāmaveda, whose principal priest in classical śrauta ritual was the Udgātar and one of whose major textual sources is R̥igveda VIII. The other major strophic type is the pragātha, consisting of two verses in two different types of "mixed lyric" meters. The usual combination is *br̥hatī* (8 8, 12 8) and *satobr̥hatī* (12 8, 12 8). Again, pragāthas are especially common in the VIIIth Maṇḍala and frequently taken over into the Sāmaveda. Thus the standard types of multi-verse groupings tended to provide the lyric or sung portion of the ritual, as against the recited portions associated with the Hotar priest.

A brief and clear account of R̥gvedic meter is given in Macdonell (1916: appendix II). For full details see Arnold (1905). Oldenberg's *Prolegomena* (1888) is invaluable both for his detailed treatment of the meters of particular hymns and sets of hymns and for his discussion of the historical implications of metrical details. Van Nooten and Holland (1994) provide a hymn-by-hymn metrical commentary in somewhat lapidary style, as well as a table of R̥gveda meters as identified in the Anukramaṇī (pp. xiv–xvi), which should be consulted for the names and characteristics of meters not explicitly discussed here.

VIII. Translation Principles

A. SANSKRIT INTO ENGLISH: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

As has been repeatedly emphasized above, the R̥gveda is a poetic text, structured by intricate meters, driven by rhetorical principles based on this metrical structure, and crafted by skillful poets for a poetically aware audience. Nonetheless, we have chosen to translate the text into prose, not verse—for several reasons. First

and perhaps most important, we are not poets, and we would dishonor the highly trained and highly inventive poets of the Ṛgveda by translating their artful creations into bad English verse. Moreover, the structures of the English language and of English verse are entirely different from those of Vedic Sanskrit. Since English lacks the elaborate morphology of Sanskrit, it is not as possible in English, without awkwardness or, indeed, loss of sense, to use word order for rhetorical rather than syntactic purposes. The stress-counting principle that regulates English blank verse and the end rhyme characteristic of much English poetry are alien to Ṛgvedic poetry. Thus the English poetry that resulted from a verse translation would not replicate in any of its most salient features the structures of Ṛgvedic poetry.

We have, however, tried to retain the verse structure as much as possible. All the translations reproduce the verse divisions found in the hymn, and within verses the hemistich boundary is also always marked, with the second hemistich beginning a new line. In fact, as noted above, it has almost always been possible to translate hemistichs as units without breaching the boundary—an indication of how strong a compositional element the hemistich was for the poets.

Translators who are also poets might succeed in rendering the Ṛgveda (or parts thereof) into poetry that captures the spirit and flair of the original, but such rendering would perforce (or so we think) distort or reinvent the literal meaning of the text. This is of course a perfectly acceptable translational strategy—some think it is the *only* acceptable strategy: that a literal translation is a fundamental betrayal of the original. But we have chosen to hew as close to what we consider the literal meaning of the text and its constituent words as we can. The text is multivalent, and over the millennia it has received multiple, often incompatible, interpretations. By translating the text literally, we hope to leave the interpretive opportunities open for the readers, inviting them to participate in the act of interpretation though providing as much guidance as we can.

As was also noted above, the everyday language of the Ṛgvedic poets was almost surely not identical to the language they used in their hymn compositions. They may well have spoken a form of early Middle Indo-Aryan—judging from some Middle Indic phonological features found in the hymns—or at the very least a more stripped-down form of Sanskrit, with the limitations on morphological categories and variant forms found in middle Vedic prose and in Epic and Classical Sanskrit. Since they were therefore composing in a deliberately archaic style, we have aimed for a fairly formal and old-fashioned English style on both the lexical and the syntactic levels, with occasional whiffs of the archaic. (For example, one of us often translates the morphologically opaque archaic frozen form *śám* with the equally opaque English "weal," to capture its linguistic isolation; the other of us prefers "luck," which does have the advantage of conveying more sense to the modern English reader.)

The poets were, however, quite aware of linguistic registers, and are capable of making wrenching shifts from, for example, the high-register solemnity of most of their production to slangy and sometimes obscene humorous banter. (See, for

example, Indrāṇī's discourse in X.86, which lurches from shockingly explicit vulgarity [especially from a goddess] to the highest of high styles.) Such passages are especially common in dānastutis. When we have been able to identify low-register vernacular passages, we have attempted to render them into a similar English register.

One feature where we have deliberately avoided English archaism is in the translation of the 2nd-person pronouns, singular versus plural (and dual)—rendering all of them with "you," although it would occasionally have been useful to disambiguate between singular and plural. In part this is an English stylistic choice: a consistent distinction between "thou/thee" and "ye/you" quickly becomes wearisome for the reader. But it would also produce a *misleadingly* archaic impression; the distinction between the singular and plural [/dual] 2nd-person pronouns remains a feature in Sanskrit throughout its history, and, though the dual was lost, the singular-plural distinction was also a feature of Middle Indo-Aryan. Therefore this same distinction in Vedic Sanskrit carried no stylistic weight at all; it's simply an unremarkable feature of the grammar, and the obsolete English "thou" would distort the effect of the text.

An area where the balancing act between R̥gvedic style and English intelligibility most tests the translator is in the placement of words. The R̥gvedic poet may set a word at the beginning of a verse or hemistich to draw special attention to it, or hold back words until the end of the verse to surprise his audience or cause them to change their expectations about the meaning of the line. He may position identical or similar elements in the same place in a sequence of verses in order to build larger rhetorical units or to emphasize the similarity of ideas in the verses, or may scramble elements that underlyingly belong together in order to produce a mosaic effect, whose contours only become clear over time. In short, the poet can use the placement of words in order to unfold his ideas in a particular and deliberate way. The freer word order that an inflected language and a shared poetic diction allow gave the poets flexibility in arranging their verse. Our translation does not aspire to be poetic, and our medium is the highly uninflected English language. Nonetheless, we have been reluctant to surrender all attempts to follow the poets' positioning of elements, and have tried to follow the order of words and ideas as well as we can, especially in cases where the verbal positioning seems to make a particular rhetorical or conceptual point. The result is an English that is not quite natural. Apart from preserving the structure of the verse and the unfolding of ideas, there are other advantages we see in adopting this style. It reminds readers that the R̥gveda is elevated and solemn poetry, and it signals that even for the composers and their audience the language of the R̥gveda was not everyday speech and the expression of ideas in the text was not designed to be direct and pellucid. A translation into a too fluent and colloquial English would produce a very misleading impression of the original. We hope that this style of translation will slow readers enough to allow them to sense the style of the original, while not rendering the English too impenetrable.

One of the features of almost all previous translations of the text, as well as the scholarly paraphernalia, like dictionaries, that have supported these translations, is that the lexical range in the translation language is very narrow and tends toward the abstract, the general, and the overlapping. It's a standing joke among Vedicists that all verbs mean "shine," "sing," "speed," or "give"; all adjectives, "bright" or "swift"; all nouns, "praise." This monotony contrasts sharply with the variety and color of the R̥gveda's Sanskrit. As we have already noted, Grassmann's lexicon of the R̥gveda is enormous compared to the size of the text (there must be somewhere in the digital world a metric for evaluating lexical diversity per text size). The "sing/speed/shine" translational style severely flattens this lexical richness. It is as if all the verbal exuberance of Shakespeare were squeezed into the neo-classical spareness of a French dramatist like Racine.

This habit not only robs the translation of its verbal diversity but, perhaps more important, of its metaphorical content. Translators are usually not *semantically wrong* when they translate a verb as, say, "shine," but they are often translating the underlying sense of a metaphor rather than the more vivid, and often more jarring, image evoked by a more precise word. To give a single example, there is a verbal root √*ribh* that seems literally to mean "croak," "creak," "rasp," "squawk"—used, for example, of the sound of a creaky wagon, or of a crackling fire. It is also frequently used of poets and praise-singers, and a nominal derivative of it, *rebhá*, is regularly applied to poets. But—no surprise—the standard rendering in current translations and dictionaries is "singer"—German "Sänger"—and this certainly correctly identifies the referent of the word. But the particular voice quality, perhaps "hoarse" or "husky," is sacrificed to making a fluent and easily interpreted translation—not scaring the horses, as it were, by suggesting that the singers were anything but mellifluous.

The twentieth century saw much progress in limiting and pinpointing the meaning of many R̥gvedic words, and in appreciating their position in linguistic register (e.g., solemn and hieratic vs. colloquial vs. technical vs. unmarked and general). Incorporating these results makes for a much more vivid text, but also a "spikier" one, with unsettling or discordant images or juxtapositions of concepts. To return to the √*ribh* example just given, a translation like "hear the poet as he rasps" (VIII.37.7) is more likely to take the reader aback than "hear the praise-singing poet" (Geldner's "den lobsingenden…"), but a simile in a passage also containing this verb, IX.97.57 "the poets squawk like birds of prey," supports the less easy interpretation. In that passage Geldner's attempt to rescue it so radically attenuates the phrase that it becomes close to incomprehensible: "the seers become audible like vultures" ("werden die Seher lautbar wie die Geier").

In our translation we have aimed, again, for the literal, and sometimes discordant, sense of the word—*even if* the literal sense was a dead metaphor for contemporary speakers. We have, in fact, no way to determine whether a metaphor was dead or alive at the time of composition, and in any case, even if at the time of composition it was dead, it had been previously a metaphor with real poetic heft. On the

other hand, we have not been able entirely to follow the austere and chaste principle of Bergaigne and Thieme—to translate a particular word always in the same way, no matter what the context. Attempts to do so often produce unintelligible English, whereas some adjustment to context aids the reader to grasp the sense. Thus our translation has been a balancing act between the flattening effect of rendering the underlying sense as opposed to the literal surface and a too principled adherence to a single literal meaning for every word regardless of context.

In representing the spikier and more difficult style that we see in the R̥gveda, in contrast to the translation tradition that has attempted to smooth out the difficulties, fill in the gaps, and aim for clarity above all, at the expense of the literal meaning and obscure style of the original, we have been aided by the sheer chance of the age we live in. As the discussion above has repeatedly suggested, newer ways of looking at the text have the unintended result of making the text "harder." The images are more striking but also more obscure; the lexicon is more specific but the combinations of words therefore less harmonious; the ritual underpinnings cannot be glossed over, however bizarre and "unpoetic" the actions depicted may seem. We think the result is truer to the spirit of the text than the easy flow of older translations and also truer to our age. It must have been difficult to appreciate the polished obscurities of R̥gvedic verse before the twentieth century enshrined deliberate difficulty in poetry as a preeminent sign of serious verbal art. So Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot begat our poets Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, in a paradoxical reversal of the paternal relationship that a R̥gvedic bard would relish.

Stylistically the R̥gveda is a dense and compact text. This results from at least two factors. On the one hand, the elaborate morphology of Sanskrit allows a parsimony of words, as opposed to the diffuse nature of a language like English. To choose one example, this from the Atharvaveda (III.20.8): the two-word clause *áditsantaṃ dāpayatu* necessarily translates into at least eleven English words: "Let him cause the man not wishing to give to give." There is no way to reproduce the verbal spareness of Sanskrit in a language like English, which needs a plethora of function words to render the less assertive moving parts of Sanskrit morphology.

But in addition to the purely linguistic aspect, we must reckon with the narrow shared universe of discourse in the text. We have previously discussed the formulaic nature of R̥gvedic rhetoric. The shared deep-structure verbal formulae and the shared knowledge of the nature of R̥gvedic gods, rituals, and religious principles and beliefs allow the poets to refer to such knowledge with a kind of verbal shorthand—truncated or twisted formulae, brief and recherché allusions, and so forth. Deliberate ellipsis is an important stylistic feature of the text, with the audience invited and expected to fill the ellipsis.

These issues present the translators with at least two problems (in addition to figuring out what is actually going on). First, to try to reflect the density of the text in a language that is not well adapted to this style—a balancing act throughout the translation. Second, to determine *when* to supply material not found in the

particular context, and *what* to supply. Although we began the translation with the determination to supply nothing not found in the passage itself, this principle came to seem not only unworkable but also contrary to the practice of the poets, since they often rely on shared knowledge to allow their contemporary audience to "fill in the blanks" of allusive expressions. But we have tried to avoid the regrettable tendency of some translators to supply material without any methodological controls. Instead, supplied material in our translation is either generated from material recoverable from the passage itself (e.g., verbs or nouns in the same or adjacent verses) or from parallel phrases elsewhere in the text. Here the study of the parallel passages adduced by Geldner in his notes has been absolutely crucial for our interpretation, as well as other types of parallel phraseology, the discovery of which has been much aided by Lubotsky's *R̥gvedic Word Concordance* (1997). We have thus attempted to allow the poets and the verbal connections they have forged to determine what a passage needs for completion, rather than simply to follow our own whims and a common-sense notion of what has been omitted, since "common sense" is a culture-specific quality.

Most of the material we have supplied has been placed in parentheses, in order to indicate that it is the result of our extrapolation and is not found explicitly in the text itself. Although parenthetical additions can sometimes be distracting, the possibility of misleading readers about what is actually there and what is not, in a text where almost nothing can be taken for granted, seemed to us a sufficient danger to require major additions to be overtly signaled. However, some supplied material has been silently slipped into the text proper, especially necessary English function words that lack obligatory Sanskrit counterparts. For example, Sanskrit does not obligatorily supply definite or indefinite articles ("the" vs. "a[n]") and in fact does not have either category as a separate grammatical marker. But English requires them and we have supplied them; this often forces a choice on the translators as to whether a noun is indefinite ("a horse") or definite ("the horse"), but in most such cases of ambiguity we have considered it a kindness to the reader not to indicate the uncertainty with parentheses. Likewise for possessive pronouns: Sanskrit regularly does not overtly mark pronominal possession ("his horse") where English does, and in cases where the possessor seems fairly clear we have often supplied the possessive without parenthetical marking. We also regularly supply pronouns for repeated objects and the like, of the type "praise you and beseech you" rather than "praise you and beseech (you)," unless the construction and meaning are unclear or disputed. And, since Sanskrit does not have mandatory surface subjects because the verb encodes the person and number of its subject, while English requires subjects to be expressed, we have had to supply pronominal subjects, which has required us on occasion to choose the gender of the subject ("he" vs. "she" vs. "it"). Occasionally too, while the elliptical style of the R̥gveda might not repeat a verb or other crucial word in proximate clauses, good English often must do so. In these cases we have repeated the crucial word without indicating the absence of this repetition in the Sanskrit text.

A rarely used sign in our translations is the asterisk (*), which indicates that the translation rests on an emendation. Since we seldom resort to emendation, the asterisk will be encountered only occasionally.

B. FORMAT OF THE TRANSLATIONS

Perhaps the most unusual feature of our translation is our decision to avoid the use of footnotes entirely. We did not begin with that idea, but several considerations led us to it. First, the notes in Geldner's translation, especially the parallels he cites, are full and informative, and interested readers should consult them: knowledge of German is not required for tracking down the parallels. Further, this translation will appear approximately coincident with the new Witzel-Gotō translation into German, which contains annotations to verses that build on Geldner's work. Yet another set of similar annotations seemed to us unnecessary and redundant.

Second and more important, however, this decision reflects our view of the text. One of the aims of this translation is to demonstrate that the hymns are unified, structured compositions and not merely collections of single verses randomly collected into hymns. Our emphasis on the integrity and structure of R̥gvedic hymns, on the idea that the sūkta is the essential compositional unit, is to us the most persuasive reason to avoid footnotes, endnotes, or running commentary. If we were to invite readers to turn away from the progress of the hymn toward notes of one kind or another, we would risk causing them to lose precisely the thing we most want our readers to have, the sense of the hymn as a compositional whole.

The starkness of our presentation is softened by several different strategies, corresponding to different types of problems the text presents. First and most important, we provide introductions to each hymn. These introductions treat the overall structure of the hymn, its theme or themes, the development of the hymn, and any special features it may have—special features being defined as whatever strikes the translators as particularly noteworthy. These include intertextual connections with other R̥gvedic hymns, especially in the oeuvre of the same poet, spectacular rhetorical flights or poetic devices, marked metrical features, out-of-the-ordinary ritual procedures or models of rituals, little-known myths, interesting twists on well-known myths, and so forth. We also discuss the conformity or nonconformity of the hymn to the expected patterns of organization in the maṇḍala or hymn collection when relevant—where verses or even whole hymns have been added and hymns have been combined, divided, or relocated. Such changes reflect the compositional history of the text and may be important for the interpretation of the hymn.

On the other hand, the discussions in the introductions generally do not treat technical linguistic details, except insofar as they impact the reader's experience of the hymn. However, we do not apologize for regularly mentioning grammatical features of the hymn in such cases: the poets were, among other things, expert grammarians and often deployed particular linguistic forms to subtle semantic ends. To

remain in ignorance of this linguistic dimension of the hymns is to miss many of their most striking effects.

In the introductions we usually do not engage with the considerable secondary literature on the hymn or the variant interpretations of other translators and commentators, including Sāyaṇa. Although study of this material has deeply affected our reading of the text, a detailed discussion of how and why we differ from other interpretations would swell our already long work to unmanageable proportions.

We know of no other R̥gveda translation that systematically provides such introductions for every hymn, rather than just for the famous or the famously difficult hymns. We hope that these introductions will give readers sufficient guidance to proceed through the hymn without getting unduly mired in the difficult parts. We also hope that the introductions will make clear how very different R̥gvedic hymns are from one another, even when they are "about" the same subject, and will counter the general assumption that the liturgical material in the R̥gveda, which of course makes up the greater part of the text, is monotonously the same throughout. Quite the contrary: the poets obviously sought novelty not only in individual details of imagery and wording but also in their overall approach to well-worn topics, and they thought out innovative ways to frame such topics. Even the sixty-seven gāyatrī hymns to Soma Pavamāna that occupy the first half of the IXth Maṇḍala and are extremely narrowly focused on a very few steps of ritual procedure manage an astounding amount of variety within these metrical and topical limits. In fact, they might serve as a textbook of how a R̥gvedic poet deploys his skills to produce multiple, very different versions of a simple and single message.

A second type of aid we provide to readers relates to a major stumbling block they will encounter in approaching the translation directly: while the original audience of the R̥gveda would have been able to identify the referent in a particular verse on the basis of characteristic epithets, defining actions, or habitual associations, our readers will not have the cultural knowledge that the poet and his audience shared. Therefore, in many cases in which such references may not be clear to our readers, we have inserted brief bracketed identifications to situate the reader with as little fuss as possible. We have kept such bracketed additions to a minimum, since we assume that the general introduction will familiarize our readers with common epithets, characteristics, and tropes, and therefore identifications of the type "Vr̥tra-smasher [=Indra]" will be unnecessary. These bracketed additions are to be differentiated from material in parentheses, supplied from context and necessary to complete the syntactic construction of the verse, as was discussed immediately above. We should note that identifying every stray referent and decoding every cryptic image, either in the introduction or the bracketed insertions, would prove to be unduly distracting—not to mention sometimes impossible—and readers are encouraged to let the momentum of the poetry carry them across these little perplexities. Some bracketed additions signal possible double meanings (puns or double references) of single words, expressions, or constructions in the text; the alternatives will be separated by a slash.

Occasionally, for hymns in which density of reference or deliberate obscurity makes each verse a challenge to decode and appreciation of the hymn as a whole depends on following the unfolding of its cryptic train of thought, we will provide a verse-by-verse exegesis in the introduction to the hymn. Again, we have kept such discursive treatment to a minimum—not only for considerations of space, but also on principled grounds: the R̥gveda is, first and foremost, poetry, and detailed paraphrase is a terrible crime to commit against poetry. It is especially a crime against this poetry, where verbal execution, rhetorical ingenuity, and deliberate complexity are central to its poetic style.

The heading of each hymn will provide the maṇḍala and hymn number, followed, in parentheses, by its "Grassmann number." Grassmann's R̥gvedic lexicon did not make use of the usual numbering system of maṇḍala plus hymn, but through-numbered the entire text without regard to maṇḍala (or aṣṭaka) divisions. Although this number will be irrelevant for most readers of the translation, for those who use the translation in conjunction with the Sanskrit text and the various relevant reference works, including Grassmann's lexicon, the Grassmann number will facilitate cross-reference. (The Grassmann numbers for the first maṇḍala are not supplied, as they are identical with the hymn number in that maṇḍala.) The deity (or other element) who is the dedicand of the hymn follows the Grassmann number in the first line, almost always according to the Anukramaṇī, except when the Anukramaṇī's identification is plainly fanciful or wrong. On the next line is the poet, again as given by the Anukramaṇī; the third line gives the number of verses in the hymn, the meter(s), and strophic arrangement, if there is one.

C. HYMN DISTRIBUTION BY TRANSLATOR

At the beginning of this project, we two translators each took primary responsibility for approximately half the hymns of the R̥gveda and produced first and usually second drafts of them. As the project continued, we consulted with each other at every turn, passed hymns back and forth, and read each other's translations critically. In the end, however, the final version of each hymn became the responsibility of a single translator. The division of those final versions is as follows:

Maṇḍala I
JPB: 1, 24–25, 32, 46–47, 116–120, 157–158, 161, 164–165, 170–171
SWJ: 2–23, 26–31, 33–45, 48–115, 121–156, 159–160, 162–163, 166–169, 172–191

Maṇḍala II
JPB: 11–24, 27–28, 39
SWJ: 1–10, 25–26, 29–38, 40–43

Maṇḍala III
JPB: 1–7, 9–29, 58–60
SWJ: 8, 30–57, 61–62

Maṇḍala IV
JPB: 33–37, 42
SWJ: 1–32, 38–41, 43–58
Maṇḍala V
JPB: 1–28, 62–78, 85
SWJ: 29–61, 79–84, 86–87
Maṇḍala VI: SWJ
Maṇḍala VII
JPB: 1–17, 48, 50–52, 60–74, 82–89
SWJ: 18–47, 49, 53–59, 75–81, 90–104
Maṇḍala VIII: SWJ
Maṇḍala IX: SWJ
Maṇḍala X
JPB: 71–72, 81–82, 90, 108, 121, 129–130
SWJ: 1–70, 73–80, 83–89, 91–107, 109–120, 122–128, 131–191

Volume I

I

Maṇḍala I

The first maṇḍala of the R̥gveda is also, in part, one of its later additions, as was discussed in detail in the general introduction. Like Maṇḍala X, it consists of 191 hymns, which belong to two different strata of the text. The first fifty hymns, attributed to six different groups of poets, constitute the later stratum. They are primarily in dimeter meter, sometimes arranged in tr̥cas, and the Kaṇva affiliation of a number of the poets connects this section with Maṇḍala VIII.

1–11	Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra (etc.)
12–23	Medhātithi Kāṇva
24–30	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
31–35	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
36–43	Kaṇva Ghaura
44–50	Praskaṇva Kāṇva

For the most part the poetry is not particularly inspired and has a narrow liturgical focus, especially in the first few collections. The major exception is the brief series attributed to Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa, all in trimeter meter. This sequence contains one of the most famous hymns in the R̥gveda, I.32, the clearest treatment of the Indra-Vr̥tra myth and a poetic masterwork, as well as I.33, less celebrated but displaying equal poetic skill.

The second and far longer part of Maṇḍala I (51–191) consists of hymns attributed to nine groups of poets:

51–57	Savya Āṅgirasa
58–64	Nodhas Gautama
65–73	Parāśara Śāktya
74–93	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
94–115	Kutsa Āṅgirasa (etc.)
116–126	Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
127–139	Paruchepa Daivodāsi
140–164	Dīrghatamas Aucathya
165–191	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi

A number of these poets have quite distinctive stylistic personalities and thematic preoccupations, and their collections contain some of the most glorious poetry in the R̥gveda. Some of the hymns are quite famous (e.g., I.164, the "riddle hymn";

I.179, the dialogue between the seer Agastya and his impatiently amorous wife Lopāmudrā), but there are many treasures to be unearthed among the lesser known hymns. We refer the reader to the introductions to the various hymn collections and their individual hymns.

The first ten hymns of the R̥gveda are attributed to Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra, with I.11 ascribed to his son or descendant Jetar Mādhuchandasa. After the opening hymn to Agni and two hymns (2–3) to the deities of the Praügaśastra litany, the remainder of the hymns are addressed to Indra, most of them relatively simple and without notable features.

It is of course appropriate that the whole R̥gveda collection should begin with a hymn to the deified ritual fire as the focal point of the sacrificial system. This hymn in its relative simplicity and its clear exposition of Agni's ritual role seems almost to have been chosen for this prominent position for pedagogical purposes. It certainly continues to serve such purposes in the modern West, where it is generally the first hymn a student of the R̥gveda encounters and from which the mysteries of Vedic Sanskrit grammar—accents, subjunctives, unexpected long vowels, variant nominal forms, and so on—and of Vedic ritual are absorbed. It is therefore not surprising that it is often assumed to be typical of R̥gvedic Agni hymns, but this is emphatically not the case: elsewhere in the R̥gveda Agni hymns often display especially contorted syntax and complex imagery and glory in enigma and paradox. The choice of this particular Agni hymn to open the R̥gveda thus seems even more purposeful against the background of more standard treatments of Agni.

I.1 Agni

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
9 verses: gāyatrī

As Oldenberg (1897) has noted, the first verse of this hymn was apparently the first verse of the R̥gveda already at the time of the composition of X.20–26, a collection that also begins *agním īḷe*. The two hymns that follow, I.2 and I.3, together invoke the principal deities of the three soma-pressings in a day-long soma rite. This hymn forms an appropriate opening for them, since the sacrifice is instituted first by the placement of fire, although the sacrificial fire here is not just the fire of the soma rite, since in verse 7 the poet speaks of revering the fire every day.

Here, as in other hymns to Agni, the poets praise him as the deified Fire of the sacrifice, who moves between the divine and human realms. Agni is a god, and yet he is also the visible fire, accessible to humans. As both god and element, Agni is "placed to the fore" (vs. 1) because the principal fire of the sacrifice is placed in the east of the sacrificial area and because the god Agni leads the appearances of the other gods of the rite. He is a divine priest, who carries the offerings and praises of the human priests to the gods and who brings the gifts

of the gods to mortals. Saussure describes this hymn as a "versified paradigm of Agni," since it begins by mentioning the god's name in various cases as the first word in the first pāda of the first five verses: accusative, nominative, instrumental, dative, and again nominative (Elizarenkova 1995: 153). Displaying one of the verbal tricks R̥gvedic poets delight in, this pattern is broken by modification at the beginning of verse 6, which opens *yád aṅgá*, the latter word being a particle that is also a scrambling of the god's name. The same verse ends with an epithet of Agni in the vocative, *aṅgiraḥ*, likewise a phonological scrambling of his name. The vocative *agne* is also found in three of the last four verses (vs. 8 is the exception). This structure not only displays the artfulness of the poet, but perhaps also suggests the various forms of the sacrificial Fire that are analogous to the many grammatical forms of the word "fire."

1. Agni do I invoke—the one placed to the fore, god and priest of the sacrifice,
   the Hotar, most richly conferring treasure.
2. Agni, to be invoked by ancient sages and by the present ones—
   he will carry the gods here to this place.
3. By Agni one will obtain wealth and prosperity every day,
   glorious and richest in heroes.
4. O Agni, the sacrifice and rite that you surround on every side—
   it alone goes among the gods.
5. Agni, the Hotar with a poet's purpose, the real one possessing the brightest fame,
   will come as a god with the gods.
6. When truly you will do good for the pious man, o Agni,
   just that of yours is real, o Aṅgiras.
7. We approach you, o Agni, illuminator in the evening, every day with our insight,
   bringing homage—
8. (You), ruling over the rites, the shining herdsman of the truth,
   growing strong in your own home.
9. Like a father for a son, be of easy approach for us, o Agni.
   Accompany us for our well-being.

I.2 Vāyu (1–3), Indra and Vāyu (4–6), Mitra and Varuṇa (7–9)

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This and the following hymn constitute what is later called the Praügaśastra, the "yoke-pole-tip recitation," which is the second recited litany in the morning soma-pressing. In classical śrauta ritual the śastra consists of seven sets of three verses or

tr̥cas. In the recitation each triplet of verses is preceded by an introductory *nivid*, a brief declaration of the deities invoked in the recitation. Recitations typically combine verses from different hymns, or they may require that the form of the R̥gvedic verses be recast, but in this case the nivids need only be added to produce the recitation. These two hymns, therefore, are already fit for the classical performance of the soma ritual.

As Insler (2002) has shown, the sequence of gods in I.2–3 represents the sequence of gods who receive cups of soma during the soma-pressing day. The rite reflected in the hymns was neither a version of the soma ritual represented in the Family Books of the R̥gveda nor that of the classical ritual, although it comes fairly close to the latter. Rather, these two hymns represent a transitional period in the development of the soma rite as it moved toward its classical form.

In the R̥gvedic rite, Vāyu was the first of the gods to receive the soma and therefore the first tr̥ca of I.2 is dedicated to him. In the classical rite, the recipients of soma at the Morning Pressing are, for the most part, dual divinities. The first pair is Indra and Vāyu, to whom our second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) is dedicated, and the second pair is Mitra and Varuṇa, addressed in our third tr̥ca (vss. 7–9).

In I.3 the first tr̥ca is dedicated to the two Aśvins, who are the third set of dual divinities at the classical Morning Pressing. In the classical rite there are also morning offerings to Indra and to the All Gods. Those gods are mentioned in the next two tr̥cas (Indra, vss. 4–6; the All Gods, vss. 7–9), but at the time of the composition of these hymns, these verses probably refer to the midday and evening rites rather than to the morning offering.

In most of the Family Books of the R̥gveda, Indra alone is the principal at the Midday Pressing, though especially in Maṇḍala III there is evidence that the Maruts have joined Indra as dedicands, as in the classical rite. The Maruts are not mentioned in our hymn, however, and were probably not a part of the soma rite for which these hymns were composed. Although the R̥bhus and Indra were the principal recipients of soma at the Third Pressing for most of the R̥gvedic period, the R̥bhus are absent from this hymn, indicating that, as also in the classical rite, they had already all but disappeared from the soma rite. Rather, in this hymn and in the classical rite, there is a soma offering to the All Gods in the evening. This association of the All Gods with the Third Pressing must be fairly old, since the Brāhmaṇa texts refer to the Third Pressing as *vaiśvadevyam* "belonging to the All Gods." The last tr̥ca (vss. 10–12) of I.3 is to Sarasvatī, who does not receive an offering in the Third Pressing at the classical rite and has only a limited presence in the R̥gveda. However, she likely did receive soma at the Third Pressing in the period of this transitional rite.

For further on this śastra and the order of divinities addressed, see the other hymns with this structure, I.23 and II.41, as well as I.139 in part. It is not clear why the śastra has been split into two hymns just in this case.

The actual content of the two hymns is quite simple. In I.2 the first two tr̥cas to Vāyu and Indra and Vāyu respectively announce that the soma has been pressed and urge the gods to come to our sacrifice. The tr̥ca to Mitra and Varuṇa is slightly more interesting, in that it mentions the frequently conjoined notions of "insight"

(*dhī́*), "skill" (*dákṣa*), and "resolve" or "purpose" (*krátu*), the three elements necessary to conceive and carry out an action.

1. O Vāyu, lovely to see, drive here! Here are the properly prepared soma juices.
   Drink of them! Hear our summons!
2. O Vāyu, with their hymns the singers sing you here—
   they who have pressed soma, who understand the (ritual) days.
3. O Vāyu, your nourishing stream infusing (the soma) is going along for the pious man—
   the broadly spreading (stream) for soma-drinking.

4. O Indra and Vāyu, here are the soma-pressings: come near with delight,
   for the soma drops are eager for you.
5. O Vāyu and Indra, you take note of the pressings, you two rich in prizewinning mares.
   Drive right here at speed.
6. O Vāyu and Indra, drive right here to the appointed place of the soma-presser,
   swiftly and according to our insight right to the point, you superior men.

7. I call upon Mitra of refined skill and Varuṇa, who cares for the stranger,
   the two who send our ghee-covered insight to its goal.
8. By truth— o Mitra and Varuṇa, strong through truth, touching truth—
   you have attained your lofty purpose.
9. The two sage poets, Mitra and Varuṇa, powerfully born, having a wide dwelling place,
   furnish us effective skill.

I.3 Aśvins (1–3), Indra (4–6), All Gods (7–9), Sarasvatī (10–12)

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

See the introduction to the preceding hymn. This hymn is the continuation and conclusion of the Praügaśastra and follows the order of divinities discussed in the introduction to I.2. As in I.2, the contents are fairly banal—urging each god or divine group to come and enjoy our sacrificial offerings.

In both I.2 and I.3 the tr̥cas contain internal repetitions that unify them, though these unifying devices are of an elementary type. There are also less apparent linkages between tr̥cas created by verbal repetitions in the last verse of one tr̥ca and the first of the next. So, for example, I.2.6c and 7c mention our "insight" (*dhī́*). The last

pāda (c) of I.3 begins *ā́ yātam* and 4a has *ā́ yāhi* "drive here," both imperatives to the same root. And 6c and 7c refer to *sutá* "pressed soma," though there is no obvious link between the third tr̥ca of I.3 and the last one to Sarasvatī.

1. O Aśvins, quick-handed lords of beauty, in the sacrificial refreshments
   find your delight, you two providing many enjoyments.
2. O Aśvins of many wondrous powers, you superior men with powerful insight,
   you holy ones, cherish our songs.
3. O wondrous Nāsatyas, the soma-pressings of the man who has twisted the ritual grass are seeking you.
   Drive here, o you who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts].

4. O Indra, drive here!—you of bright radiance. These soma-pressings here are seeking you,
   the ones purifed in full measure by delicate (fingers).
5. O Indra, drive here!—roused by our insight, sped by our inspired poets,
   to the sacred formulations of the cantor who has the pressed soma.
6. O Indra, drive here!—thrusting yourself onward to the sacred formulations, o possessor of fallow bays.
   Take delight in our pressed soma.

7. O helpers, supporters of the peoples, you All Gods—come here
   as pious ones to the pressed soma of the pious man.
8. The All Gods crossing the waters—come here to the pressed soma!—
   like ruddy (cows) to good pastures.
9. The All Gods—unfailing, undeceiving, (with the byword) "come, don't go!"—
   enjoy the ritual offering as its conveyors.

10. Let pure Sarasvatī, providing prize mares along with prizes,
    be eager for our sacrifice, bringing goods through her insight.
11. The impeller of liberal gifts, taking note of good thoughts,
    Sarasvatī has received our sacrifice.
12. Her great flood does Sarasvatī reveal with her beacon.
    She rules over all insights.

I.4 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

As Bergaigne (1889: 182) points out, the hymns I.4–9, all dedicated to Indra, all in gāyatrī, and all attributed to the same Vaiśvāmitra poet, form the texts on which

the Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin priest, an assistant of the Hotar, draws for supplementary verses at the Morning Pressing.

This particular hymn consists of three tr̥cas and a final summary verse (10); the first and last tr̥cas are fairly conventional. In the first (vss. 1–3) the poet calls on Indra to come to our sacrifice and consume our soma. In the last (vss. 7–9) the poet again offers Indra soma and recounts Indra's past deeds inspired by his soma-drinking, with hopes for similar future exploits.

The middle tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) is a different matter and displays some anxiety about the poet's exclusive focus on Indra—"putting all his eggs in one basket," in the English idiom. In verse 4, immediately after the peremptory command to Indra, "come here!" the poet orders himself (or another person?) to "go away!"—to seek out Indra and inquire who he [=Indra, in our view] favors as a comrade, in an indirect question with a curious mixture of direct and indirect syntax. The question is also rhetorical: the poet expects Indra to favor him, and in verses 5 and 6 he defends the exclusive partnership against unnamed cavilers, by asserting that having Indra alone on his side is a good bargain. The defensive tone of this tr̥ca may seem an odd feature of the first full hymn to Indra in the R̥gveda, but it does strike a note that we will meet again and again in the collection—the worried hope that Indra will indeed choose to attend *our* sacrifice and that he will extend his help to us alone.

1. The one who assumes a good form for help—like a good milk-cow for a
   cow-milker—
   do we call upon every day.
2. Come here to our pressings. Drink of the soma, soma-drinker.
   It's a rich man's exhilaration that gives cows.
3. Then might we know your favors up close.
   Do not look past us—come here!

4. Go away! Ask Indra, spirited and indestructible, attentive to poetic
   inspiration,
   who is your choice from among your comrades.
5. And let scorners say to us, "You have missed out on the rest
   in placing your friendship in Indra alone."
6. But (even) a stranger—(indeed all) the separate peoples—would say we
   have a good portion, o wondrous one.
   (For) we would be in the protection of Indra alone.

7. Bring the swift to the swift—(bring soma), the glory of the sacrifice,
   causing exhilaration to men,
   exhilarating our comrade [=Indra] in its flight.
8. Having drunk of this, o you of a hundred resolves, you became the bane
   of obstacles.
   You helped the prizewinner to the prizes.

9. We incite you, the prizewinner, to the prizes, o you of a hundred resolves,
to win the stakes, Indra.

10. He who is a great stream-bed of wealth but easy to cross, the comrade of the soma-presser—
to him, to Indra, sing!

I.5 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

A generally unremarkable hymn, with the usual offering of soma and praise to Indra in return, we hope, for help and favor. The favors especially desired are help and support in battles and raids and the victory prizes won in them (see vss. 3–4, 9–10), and the hymn ends (vs. 10) on a slightly worried note, with a reference to our enemies among men.

Structurally, the hymn divides into two halves. In the first (vss. 1–5), the poet addresses his fellow priests, commanding them to sing the songs, pointing to the prepared soma, and declaring what Indra can do. In the second half (vss. 6–10) he turns to Indra himself, reminding the god what the offerings will do for him. The birth of Indra (vs. 6) refers not only to his ancient birth but also to his appearance at this sacrifice. The single day in which he achieves his full strength is the sacrificial day, so that by the end of the day, he has the power to help the sacrificers.

1. Here—come here—sit down: sing forth to Indra,
o comrades, whose vehicles are praise songs—
2. To the first among many, having control of desirable things,
to Indra when the soma is pressed.
3. Will he be here for us at our hitching up (for war), he for wealth, he in plenty?
Will he come to us with prizes of victory?
4. He whose two fallow bays his rivals do not obstruct in the competition or in combats—
to him, to Indra, sing!
5. These pure [=unmixed] pressed soma drinks go in pursuit of the soma-drinker,
and those mixed with curds.
6. You were born and were grown strong in a single day to drink the pressed soma,
for preeminence, o Indra of good resolve.
7. Let the swift soma drinks enter you, o Indra, who long for song.
Let them be weal for you, the discerning one.

8. The praises have strengthened you, you the recitations, o you of a hundred resolves.
   Let our songs strengthen you.
9. Providing his imperishable help, Indra should win this prize of a thousand—
   he in whom are all manly powers.
10. Let mortals not plot deception against our bodies, o Indra, who long for song.
    Having control of it, keep away the deadly weapon.

I.6 Indra (1–3, 10), Maruts (4, 6, 8–9), Indra and Maruts (5, 7)

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

A disjointed and episodic hymn. The Anukramaṇī ascription of the verses to a combination of Indra and the Maruts is reproduced in the above heading, but it is almost certainly wrong—though the confusion generated by the hymn makes the error pardonable. The Maruts do not appear to figure in the hymn at all, and, though Indra does, there are other divine figures in some of the verses assigned to him. As often, the hymn jumps back and forth from 2nd- to 3rd-person reference and from past to present time, but in this case the jumps are particularly disorienting and the overall structure hard to discern.

Modern attempts at interpretation generally begin with the Vala myth and the main divine personages therein, Indra and the Aṅgirases, his singer-assistants in this myth. The myth is most clearly alluded to in verse 5, the central verse (especially if vs. 10 is considered to be a mere variant of parallel vs. 9), and we may see here an interesting structural contrast to the omphalos hymn: instead of embedding the mystery in the middle verse and leading up to and away from it with clearer material, the poet here may have designed the middle verse as the key to the many questions posed by the diffuse fragments surrounding it and a motif in which to integrate them.

In any case verse 5 presents us with Indra finding the hidden cows within a stronghold with the help of an unnamed group, who must be the Aṅgirases. In our view this myth does provide the thematic backdrop for the whole hymn and is alluded to directly (or as directly as it gets) also in verses 6 and 8. But most of the rest of the hymn treats the ritual re-creation of Indra's releasing the dawns from the Vala cave—namely the rising of the sun, the kindling of the ritual fire, and Indra's journey to the early-morning sacrifice, and the most enigmatic verses refer, in our view, to Agni—not, as in other interpretations, to the sun or to Indra.

A brief and tentative synopsis: the first two verses, parallel in structure, depict the simultaneous hitching up of the sun (vs. 1) and Indra's chariot (vs. 2) for their

respectively daily journeys. These verses are set in the present moment. Verse 3 is structurally paired with verse 7 in the architecture of the hymn; both are addressed to an unidentified 2nd sg. referent—in our view Agni, who is kindled at dawn (vs. 3) at the same time as Indra arrives at the sacrifice (vs. 7). Verse 3 is set in the mythic past, perhaps at Agni's first kindling by the Aṅgirases, an event also presented in verse 4, while verse 7 returns us to the present. (Verse 3 also contains an absolutely baffling 2nd *plural* vocative, "o young men," embedded within a verse with entirely 2nd *singular* reference. Short of emendation, there is little to be done with it, though it may refer to the plural subjects of verse 4, the fire-priests, who kindled the embryonic Agni.) Verse 5 provides the Vala-myth clue, and the remainder of the verses meld a mythic account of the rituals of dawn with reference to the ritual of the present moment.

1. They hitch up the coppery, ruddy (sun) that circles around the ones [=stars?] standing still.
   The lights are alight in heaven.
2. They hitch his beloved fallow bays to his chariot on opposite sides,
   the bold pair of sorrels, conveyors of the superior man [=Indra].
3. You young men—making a beacon for that without beacon and an ornament for that without ornament,
   you [=Agni] were born together with the dawns.
4. Certainly, just after that they once again roused his embryonic state [=kindled the fire] according to his nature,
   acquiring for themselves a name worthy of the sacrifice.
5. Along with the (ritual-)conveyors [=Aṅgirases] who break even the stronghold, o Indra,
   you discovered the ruddy (cattle) even though in hiding.
6. As those seeking the gods (bellow) their thought, the songs have bellowed to the finder of goods,
   great and famous.
7. Since you [=Agni] will come to sight along with Indra, having joined together with the fearless one,
   (you two are) the delighting pair who share the same luster.
8. Together with the irreproachable, heaven-bound (Aṅgirases), the battler chants mightily,
   together with Indra's beloved troops.
9. From there or from the luminous realm of heaven come here, o earth-circling one.
   The songs converge on him.
10. We beseech Indra for gain from here, the earthly realm, or from heaven,
    or from the great airy space.

I.7 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

A relatively simple praise of Indra, focused especially on his possession of the mace (vss. 2c, 3c, 7b) and his help in battles and contests (vss. 4–6). Indra's mythological exploits receive cursory treatment in verse 3. A more insistent theme emerges toward the end, with an accumulation of loaded terms for potentially rival groups of people: *kṛṣṭīḥ* "communities" (8b), *carṣanīnā́m* "domains" (9a), *páñca kṣitīnā́m* "the five peoples" (9c), *jánebhyaḥ* "men" (10b), culminating in the hope that Indra will leave those rivals behind and become exclusively ours.

But one can say that the real focus of the hymn is Indra's name. The poem, especially its first half, is characterized by the insistent repetition of the name, with "Indra" as the first word in verses 1–5 and also in verse-internal lines 1b, 1c, 2c, and 5b. After verse 5, the poet noticeably pauses in verses 6–8, using the name only once. Even so, that one occurrence, which is in 7b, is in a marked position as the middle word of the middle line of the middle verse of this three-verse section. This pause or break accents the reappearance of the name twice in rapid succession at the beginning of 9c and 10a. Thematically, the emphasis on the name of Indra underscores the poet's desire that the person of Indra, independent of all else, be present at his sacrifice.

Verse 6 contains a somewhat obscure request that Indra "uncover yonder pot." "Yonder pot" probably refers to anything distant that contains what the poet and his people want or need. A reasonable parallel is VIII 23.29bc, *tváṃ no gómatīr íśaḥ, mahó rāyáḥ sātím agne ápā vṛdhi* "Uncover for us refreshments consisting of cows and the winning of great weath, o Agni," with the same 2nd-sg. imperative *ápā vṛdhi* "uncover" and a desirable object.

1. Just to Indra have the singers bellowed aloft, to Indra the chanters with their chants,
   to Indra their voices.
2. Indra, close-linked with his two fallow bays, (is mounted) on the two yoked by speech;
   Indra is the golden wielder of the mace.
3. Indra made the sun mount in heaven for the long view.
   He propelled apart the rock with the cows (inside).
4. O Indra, help us when prizes and stakes of thousands (are set),
   as the mighty one with mighty forms of help.
5. Indra do we call upon when the stake is great and Indra when it's small,
   our mace-wielding yokemate amid obstacles.

6. You bull who give in every way, uncover yonder pot
   for us, since you are one who cannot be repulsed.
7. The praises of mace-wielding Indra that go higher at every thrust—
   I cannot get enough of good praise for him.
8. Like a bull his herds, the buffalo rouses the communities with his might,
   since he is the master who cannot be repulsed.
9. Indra, who alone has control over the settled domains and their goods,
   and over the five people,
10. Indra do we summon for you from the men all around.
   Let him be exclusively ours.

I.8 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

The first part of the hymn (vss. 1–4) asks Indra for help in battle and for the wealth (both material and in manpower) to make success in combat possible. With Indra's help, the sacrificer and his men become almost aspects of Indra himself. As he is the "smasher of obstacles," so they will "keep obstacles hemmed in." They take up Indra's mace (vs. 3) and become his "hammers," which smash their enemies. They acquire Indra as their yokemate (vs. 4).

The second part (vss. 5–10) celebrates the extent of Indra's power and the benefits it brings to the men who attain him and it. This theme is first expressed relatively straightforwardly (though with suppressed syntactic connection) in verses 5–6. But in verse 7 Indra's vastness is conveyed by a striking image, syntactically untethered, where his cheek and his gullet are compared to the wide, swollen sea. This image introduces the final three verses (8–10), each of which begins *evā́ hí* "in just this way, in the same way." In our view the underlying "same" is Indra's vast extent—both physically, in the images of verse 7, and metaphorically, in the immense liberality (vs. 8) and help (vs. 9) he bestows on us. The final verse (10), though introduced with the same expression, turns to our obligations to Indra, and, again by implication, it is suggested that our praises of Indra are as vast as his gifts to us.

The hymn is characterized throughout by chaining between verses, often not overtly marked.

1. O Indra, bring wealth here—winning, conquering, ever overpowering,
   highest—for our help—
2. (Wealth) by which we will keep obstacles hemmed in, hemmed in by
      bare-knuckled fighting,
   hemmed in (by fighting) on horseback, when we are helped by you.

3. O Indra, helped by you, might we, as your hammers, take up your mace;
 might we conquer our opponents completely in the fight.
4. With champion archers, with you as our yokemate, Indra,
 might we overcome those doing battle.
5. Great is Indra, and now let the greatness for the mace-wielder be (even)
 beyond (that).
 Like heaven in its extent is his capacious power
6. (For those) who have attained (him)—either superior men in the clash
 or at the winning of offspring
 or inspired poets seeking (him) through insight.
7. His cheek, the best soma-drinker, which swells like the sea—
 his gullet (which is) like the wide waters…
8. Just the same is his liberality—copious, great, conferring cattle,
 like a ripe branch for the pious man.
9. Just the same is your help, o Indra—extensive for one like me,
 present in an instant for the pious man.
10. In the same way those things beloved of him, praise song and
 recitation, are to be proclaimed,
 for Indra to drink the soma.

I.9 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

The "message" of this hymn is the standard one: Indra is urged to drink of our soma and enjoy our praise songs and in return to provide us with the usual good things. This relation of reciprocity is nicely conveyed stylistically by complementary paired repetitions. For example, in verse 2 Indra is to be "sent surging" to the soma (2a), while the same verb is to be supplied for the soma's movement to Indra (2b). Though this verb √*sṛj* is an unusual choice to describe Indra's locomotion, it is a standard idiom applied to soma's progress, especially in the Soma Maṇḍala (IX). (See here also the songs sent surging in verse 4.) Similarly "spur on" in verses 5–6 with "us" once as goal (vs. 5) and once as direct object (vs. 6), and verse 10 where both Indra and the chant directed to him are characterized as "lofty," after two occurrences of "lofty" applied to fame (vss. 7–8).

For readers interested in comparative Indo-European poetics, the most notable feature of the hymn is an instance of the famous, but relatively rare, formula "imperishable fame" (*śrávaḥ… ákṣitam*) in verse 7, where the two words are found in separate pādas (b and c). The resonance of this formula and the concept behind it may account for the near-exact repetition of the "place fame in us" expression in verses 7–8.

1. Indra, come! Reach exhilaration from the stalk with all its soma-joints.
   (You are) the great one, superiority (itself) by reason of your power.
2. Send him [=Indra] surging to the pressed soma, and (send) the
   exhilarator [=soma] (surging) to Indra, who seeks exhilaration,
   the doer to him who does all things.
3. O you of the lovely lips who govern all domains, reach exhilaration
   through the exhilarating praise songs
   here at these soma-pressings.
4. Our songs have been sent surging to you, Indra. They have reared up
   toward you—
   not (yet) pleasured, they (have reared up) toward the bull, their
   husband.
5. Spur on your bright benefit entirely in our direction, o Indra—the
   benefit worth wishing for:
   just yours will be the farmost and foremost.
6. Spur us on then for wealth, so that we acquire vehemence
   and glory, o powerfully brilliant one.
7. Place in us, o Indra, broad and lofty fame, accompanied by cattle and
   victory prizes,
   lifelong and imperishable.
8. Place in us lofty fame and brilliance that best wins a thousand,
   and refreshments by the cartload.
9. (We are) singing with songs to Indra, the goods-master of goods, the
   one worthy of verses,
   who will come to the call for help.
10. To him who is at home at every soma-pressing, to the lofty one, the
    stranger himself chants a lofty,
    lusty (chant) to Indra.

I.10 Indra

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
12 verses: anuṣṭubh

Oldenberg (1888: 226) remarks on the idiosyncratic arrangement of the Madhuchandas hymns (1–11) and on the location of this and the following hymn in particular. Contrary to the usual arrangement, the gāyatrī hymns of this collection (1–9) are placed as a group together before these final two hymns in anuṣṭubh.

Though the hymn displays the usual reciprocal balance between what we offer to Indra and what we ask him for, the poet focuses more on the verbal offerings we make than on the soma. Songs, praise hymns, and recitations are mentioned in

verses 1, 3–5, 9, 12—with a bit of thematic ring composition linking the first verse and the first half of the last one (12ab).

As in the last hymn (I.9) reciprocal actions are posited of Indra and his worshipers. For example in verse 4ab Indra is ordered to respond to our verbal praises by verbal actions of his own. In 4cd/5ab we first command Indra to strengthen us and our ritual, and then we produce a recitation meant to strengthen Indra in turn. We both urge him to enjoy our companionship (5d) and beg him to give us his (6a). The most ingenious example of reciprocal action is found in verse 7, in the ambiguous form *tvā́dātam*. The topic is the Vala myth and the glory that accrues from opening the Vala cave and driving out the cows. Indra of course is the major actor in this myth, and *tvā́dātam íd yáśaḥ* can be interpreted as "(that) glory is *acquired* only by you" (based on the idiom *ā́* √*dā* "take, acquire"). But Indra also shared the action with the Aṅgirases, and the myth is also often reinterpreted as engaging human priests in its ritual re-enactment, so that the same phrase can also mean "(that) glory is *given* only by you" (with the simplex √*dā* "give"). Either interpretation is morphologically, grammatically, and contextually possible.

There is otherwise little remarkable about the hymn, though in several verses the poet echoes passages found elsewhere, which he twists to a different, sometimes opposite meaning (cf. 7b with III.40.6, 8b with I.176.1, and 9ab with VII.32.5).

1. The singers sing to you; the chanters chant their chant.
   The formulators (of sacred speech) hold you up like a roof-pole, o you of a hundred resolves.
2. When he has mounted from peak to peak and has seen much to be done,
   then Indra perceives his purpose, and the ram stirs with his flock.
3. Hitch up your long-maned fallow bays, the two bullish ones filling their girthbands;
   then proceed to the hearing of our songs, o soma-drinking Indra.
4. Come to our praise songs. Cry out to them, applaud them, and bellow to them.
   Together with us, good Indra, make our formulation and our sacrifice strong.
5. A strengthening recitation is to be proclaimed to Indra who provides many fulfillments,
   so that the able one will take pleasure in our soma-pressings and in our companionship.
6. Just him do we beg for companionship, him for wealth, him for an abundance of good heroes.
   He is the able one, and he will be able for us—Indra who distributes the goods.
7. Easily opening (the pen), easily driving out (the cows)—(that) glory is acquired [/given] only by you, Indra.

Open the pen of the cows; show your generosity, o possessor of the stone.

8. Since both world-halves together cannot budge you when you show your mettle,
you will conquer the waters along with the sun. Shake loose the cows for us.

9. You of listening ear, listen to our call: now accept my songs.
Indra, make this praise song of mine closer even than your yokemate.

10. Since we know you as the best of bulls, who listen to calls when prizes (are at stake),
we call for the help of the best of bulls, the help that best wins a thousand.

11. O Indra, (god) of Kuśika, finding exhilaration, drink our pressed soma.
Lengthen our lifetime anew; make the seer the winner of a thousand.

12. Let these songs surround you on every side, o you who long for songs.
Let strengths accompany the one whose lifetime has been strengthened; let enjoyments be enjoyed (by him).

I.11 Indra

Jetar Mādhuchandasa
8 verses: anuṣṭubh

Attributed to a descendant of Madhuchandas, the poet of I.1–10, this relatively simple hymn has little distinctive about it. Several famous deeds of Indra are mentioned (Vala verse 5, Śuṣṇa verse 7), and our praises and Indra's countergifts are celebrated. These general themes are similar to those found in the Indra hymns of the ancestral Madhuchandas.

The poet is fond of etymological figures: "best charioteer of charioteers" (1c), "the conqueror who is not to be conquered" (2d), "with your tricks... the tricky..." (7a), and the probably etymologically unrelated but phonologically similar *máṃhate maghám* "grants the bounty" (3d).

1. All the songs have strengthened Indra, expansive as the sea,
the best charioteer of charioteers, the lord of prizes and the lord of settlements.

2. In comradeship with you who control the prizes, o Indra, let us not fear, o lord of power.
We keep crying out to you, the conqueror who is not to be conquered.

3. Many are the gifts of Indra; his forms of help do not become exhausted
when he grants to his praisers the bounty of a prize consisting of cattle.

4. He was born as a splitter of strongholds, a youthful poet, possessed of immeasurable power.
Indra is the sustainer of every deed, the much-praised wielder of the mace.

5. You uncovered the opening of Vala filled with cattle, o possessor of the stone.
   Before the fearless one [=Vala?], the gods, though being pushed back, came to your aid.
6. I came back with your gifts, o champion, announcing (them) to our boundary river.
   O you who long for songs, the bards have approached me: they know of this (act) of yours.
7. With your tricks, Indra, you brought down tricky Śuṣṇa.
   The wise know of that (act) of yours. Raise up their fame!
8. The praise-songs have cried out to Indra, who holds sway by his might,
   whose gifts are a thousand or even greater.

I.12–23 are attributed to Medhātithi Kāṇva, also supposedly the poet of some verses in the early hymns of Maṇḍala VIII, a predominately Kāṇva book, as well as the second hymn of the Soma Maṇḍala (IX.2). The Medhātithi First Maṇḍala hymns here are all in gāyatrī meter, save for some stray verses in I.17 and 23. They are dedicated to a variety of deities; in fact, each hymn has a different divinity or set of divinities. The poet has a particular penchant for dedicands in pairs (Indra and Varuṇa I.17, Agni and the Maruts I.19, Indra and Agni I.21) or groups (Viśve Devāḥ I.14, R̥bhus I.20, variety of divinities I.13, 15, 22–23), and in the group hymns a high proportion follow particular ritual litanies: Āprī (I.13), R̥tugrahas (I.15), Praügaśastra (I.23).

The style and contents of these hymns are for the most part elementary, even banal, and there is generally a strong focus on purely ritual matters, to the virtual exclusion of description, mythological references, praise, and even requests for aid and gifts. In short, a poetically uninspiring collection, but the information it gives about the early shape of later ritual litanies is valuable.

I.12 Agni

Medhātithi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn has a high proportion of pādas repeated from other hymns, and in some ways seems to have been assembled rather than composed. It touches on the standard characteristics and roles of Agni: messenger, priest, and poet, conveyor of the gods to the sacrifice, and protector and benefactor of men. There is essentially no description of fire; the focus is entirely on the ritual.

1. Agni we choose as messenger, the Hotar affording all possessions,
   very effective for this sacrifice.

2. Agni after Agni they always invoke with invocations as the clanlord,
   conveyor of the oblations, dear to many.
3. Agni, convey the gods here, as soon as you are born, for the man who
   has twisted the ritual grass.
   You are the Hotar, to be reverently invoked by us.
4. Awaken the eager ones, when you travel on your mission, o Agni.
   With the gods sit here on the ritual grass.
5. O shining one whose oblation is ghee, burn against those who do harm,
   o Agni, against demonic beings.
6. By Agni is Agni kindled—poet, houselord, youth,
   conveying the oblation, with the sacrificial ladle in his mouth.
7. Praise Agni, the poet whose ordinances hold true at the ceremony,
   the god who banishes afflictions.
8. The lord of the oblation who honors you as his messenger, o god Agni,
   for him become a helper.
9. The possessor of the oblation who seeks to win Agni to pursue the gods,
   to him be merciful, o pure one.
10. O pure, shining Agni, convey the gods here to us,
    right up to our sacrifice and oblation.
11. Being praised with our newer song, bring us
    wealth, a refreshment made of heroes.
12. Agni, with your blazing flame, along with all the invocations to the gods,
    enjoy this praise of ours right now!

I.13 Āprī

Medhātithi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī

This is the first Āprī hymn to be encountered in the R̥gveda of the ten in the text. In these hymns, associated with a litany during the Animal Sacrifice, a set series of subjects or key words (here italicized) is treated verse by verse, in fixed order but with variable wording. This particular Āprī hymn is a much less elaborated version than some exemplars of this form; in this hymn the default model verse is a bare mention of the topic as object of the phrase "I invite" (vss. 3, 7, 8, 10, 12). Description is minimal and for the most part predictable.

1. *Well-kindled*, o Agni, convey the gods here to us, to the man offering
   the oblation,
   and perform sacrifice, o pure Hotar.
2. O *Tanūnapāt*, make our sacrifice full of honey and make it be among
   the gods
   today, to be pursued, o poet.

3. *Narāśaṃsa*, the dear one, I invite here to this sacrifice,
   the honey-tongued preparer of the oblation.
4. O Agni, on the best-naved chariot convey the gods here when you are *solemnly invoked*.
   You are the Hotar, installed by Manu.
5. Strew in due order the *ritual grass* with ghee on its back, o inspirited ones,
   where the sighting of the immortal (host) (will be).
6. Let them gape open—the *Divine Doors*, increasing through truth, inexhaustible—
   today and now for sacrifice.
7. *Night and Dawn*, well-ornamented, I invite to this sacrifice,
   to sit here on this ritual grass of ours.
8. The two well-tongued poets, the *Divine Hotars*, I invite.
   Let them perform this sacrifice for us right here.
9. *Iḍā, Sarasvatī, Mahī*, the three *goddesses* who are joy itself—
   let them sit, unfailing, on the ritual grass.
10. Here I invite foremost *Tvaṣṭar* who provides all forms.
    Let him be ours alone.
11. Release, o *Lord of the Forest*, the oblation to the gods, o god.
    Let the display of the giver be outstanding.
12. With the *svāhā-cry* perform the sacrifice for Indra in the house of the sacrificer.
    There do I invite the gods.

I.14 All Gods

Medhātithi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī

Though this hymn is dedicated to the All Gods, its focus is on Agni's role in conveying the gods to the sacrifice and serving as the mouth and tongue through which they drink the oblations (see esp. vss. 7–8). The All God theme is cleverly introduced in the first verse by parceling out the phrase "with all these gods," a word at the beginning of each pāda (an effect clumsily reproduced in translation), and an enumeration of some of the most important of the gods is given in verse 3, But otherwise (save for mention of Indra and Vāyu, the recipients of the first soma offering, in vs. 10) the gods are an undifferentiated group and backgrounded to Agni.

The poet does not forget his own, however. He mentions his kin-group, the Kaṇvas, twice (vss. 2, 5) as the ritualists preparing the sacrifice.

1. With these, o Agni, hither to friendly service, to hymns—with all (of them), for soma-drinking—
with the gods, come and perform sacrifice.
2. The Kaṇvas have called to you; they hymn your insightful thoughts, o inspired poet.
With the gods, o Agni, come hither.
3. Indra and Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, Mitra (and Varuṇa), Agni, Pūṣan, Bhaga,
the Ādityas, the Marutian flock (have the Kaṇvas called).
4. The drops are brought forward for you (all)—the invigorating, exhilarating
droplets of honey sitting in the cups.
5. Seeking aid they solemnly invoke you, (o Agni)—the Kaṇvas with their twisted ritual grass
and their oblations, as they make fit preparations.
6. Ghee-backed, yoked with mind are the draft-horses that draw you
and the gods here to drink the soma.
7. Those (gods) deserving the sacrifice, strong through truth—bring them here along with their wives, Agni.
Make them drink of the honey, you of good tongue.
8. Those who deserve the sacrifice, who are to be invoked, let them drink with your tongue
of the honey, when the *vaṣaṭ*-call is made, o Agni.
9. The inspired poet, the Hotar, will convey all the gods awakening at dawn
hither from the luminous realm of the sun.
10. With all (the gods), o Agni, with Indra and with Vāyu, drink the somian honey
according to the ordinances of alliance.
11. As the Hotar installed by Manu, Agni, you sit at the sacrifices.
So perform this rite for us now.
12. O god, yoke the ruddy (mares) to your chariot, the fallow bays, the chestnuts.
Then with them convey the gods hither.

I.15 Ṛtudevatāḥ (Sequential Deities)

Medhātithi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn has a precise ritual application: it accompanies a series of ritual offerings (Ṛtugrahas "sequential cups") made in a fixed order to a fixed sequence of gods by a similarly fixed sequence of priests, roughly matched in function to the gods they serve. (See, e.g., Eggeling *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 2: 319 n. 1.) The

same sequence is found in the two hymns II.36–37, which together are entirely parallel to this hymn. (See further remarks in the introductions to those hymns.) The divine order and the priestly counterparts are the following. (The priests are not all mentioned by title in this hymn, but those not bracketed are found in II.36–37.)

1.	Indra	Hotar
2.	Maruts	Potar
3.	Tvaṣṭar	Neṣṭar
4.	Agni	Agnīdh
5.	Indra/Bṛhaspati	Brahman
6.	Mitra and Varuṇa	Praśāstar
7.	Wealth-Giver	Hotar
8.	Wealth-Giver	Potar
9.	Wealth-Giver	Neṣṭar
10.	Wealth-Giver	[Achāvāka, in later ritual]
11.	Aśvins	[2 Adhvaryus, in later ritual]
12.	Agni Gṛhapati	[Yajamāna, in later ritual]

It will be noted that cups 7–10 are dedicated to the same divinity, "Wealth-Giver," Draviṇodā(s), a vague figure defined only by his name who is not on the same level as the other gods, and the associated priests simply repeat the initial order. It has been convincingly argued by Renou (1950 [1978]) that as the word *ṛtú* was reinterpreted from merely "sequence, turn" to "season," the number of divinities in this litany was increased to twelve to match the months of the year by the insertion of a simple placeholder. For further on the ritual and its transformation see, inter alia, Minkowski (1991: 81–89).

1. O Indra, drink the soma in your turn. Let the drops enter you,
 the invigorating ones finding their home there.
2. O Maruts, drink in your turn from the cup of the Potar. Purify the sacrifice,
 for you are the ones of good drops.
3. Welcome our sacrifice; o Neṣṭar [=Tvaṣṭar], along with the Wives (of the Gods), drink in your turn,
 for you are the conferrer of treasure.
4. O Agni, convey the gods here; make them sit in the three wombs.
 Attend on them; drink in your turn.
5. O Indra, from the Brahman's largesse drink the soma according to your turns,
 for only your comradeship cannot be brought to ruin.
6. You two, o Mitra and Varuṇa of steadfast commandments, have attained skill difficult to trick
 and the sacrifice in your turn.

7. As for the Wealth-Giver of wealth—those with the pressing stones in their hands in the ceremony
solemnly invoke the god at the sacrifices.
8. Let the Wealth-Giver give us goods that are famed.
We shall win these for ourselves among the gods.
9. The Wealth-Giver desires to drink: pour and set it forth;
send it from the Neṣṭar's cup by turns.
10. When we sacrifice to you, o Wealth-Giver, the fourth time by turns,
then become a giver to us.
11. O Aśvins, you who have luminous fire and blazing commandments,
drink the honey in your turn, you whose vehicle is the sacrifice.
12. Through your lordship in the house, o companion, you are leader of the sacrifice in your turn.
Sacrifice to the gods for the one who seeks the gods.

I.16 Indra

Medhātithi Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī

This is nothing more than an extended invitation to Indra to come to the sacrifice, with a tempting menu of offerings and praises. One might say about this hymn that it makes reading the Ṛgveda seem easy; it also makes it seem not worth the trouble.

1. Let the fallow bays convey you here, the bull to drink the soma—
those with the eye of the sun (convey) you, Indra.
2. Here are the roasted grains, bathing in ghee; the fallow bay pair will convey Indra here right to them
in the best-naved chariot.
3. Indra we invoke early in the morning, Indra as the ceremony advances,
Indra to drink of the soma.
4. Come up here to our pressed soma, Indra, with your shaggy fallow bays,
for when it is pressed we invoke you.
5. Come here to this praise of ours, up to this pressing here when it is pressed.
Drink like a thirsty buffalo.
6. Here are the pressed soma drops on the ritual grass.
Drink them, Indra, for might.
7. Here is the foremost praise for you; let it be most availing, touching your heart.
So drink the pressed soma.
8. To every pressing when it is pressed Indra goes for exhilaration,
the Vṛtra-smasher, to drink the soma.

9. Fulfill this desire of ours with cows and horses, o you of a hundred resolves.
   Very attentive, we will praise you.

I.17 Indra and Varuṇa

Medhātithi Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī

Like Medhātithi's other hymns, this address to Indra and Varuṇa is elementary in contents: the poet calls upon those gods to aid him and give him lavish gifts in exchange for hymns. The two gods are addressed together, and there is no mention of the distinctive qualities of either god. Only in verse 5, the middle verse, are the gods separated, and even there the structures in which they appear are parallel and colorless. In contrast to the predictable and banal contents, the syntax of the hymn is surprisingly problematic. There are a number of ellipses that cannot be reliably filled (see, e.g., the parenthetic additions in verses 3–6) and syntactic clashes that are difficult to rationalize (e.g., in verse 4, whose translation skates over some of the problems). The poet may have been trying to inject some surprise into a tired poetic assignment.

1. I choose the aid of Indra and Varuṇa, the sovereign kings.
   They will be gracious to such as us.
2. For you two are the ones who come for aid to the call of an inspired poet like me,
   and are the upholders of the settled domains.
3. Satisfy (us) according to our desire from your wealth, o Indra and Varuṇa.
   We beseech you two for closest (friendship).
4. For we would like to be (part) of the powers of you two,
   of your favors that grant victory prizes.
5. Indra is (master?) of (favors) that grant thousands, Varuṇa of (riches) worth proclaiming.
   Their resolve becomes worthy of hymns.
6. With the aid of just those two might we win and secure (the winnings).
   And might there be a surplus.
7. Indra and Varuṇa, I invoke you two for brilliant bounty.
   Make us victors.
8. Indra and Varuṇa, just now, while our poetic insights are striving to win you two,
   extend shelter to us.
9. Let that lovely praise reach you two, Indra and Varuṇa, which I invoke,
   which you bring to fulfillment as your joint praise.

I.18 Brahmaṇaspati [Lord of the Sacred Formulation] (1–3), Brahmaṇaspati, Indra, and Soma (4), the Same with Dakṣiṇā (5); Sadasaspati [Lord of the Seat] (6–8), Sadasaspati or Narāśaṃsa (9)

Medhātithi Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn falls into two parts: verses 1–5 concern Brahmaṇaspati (in part in conjunction with other gods), 6–9 Sadasaspati. Though Brahmaṇaspati is a well-established divinity and an allo-form of the even better established Bṛhaspati, Sadasaspati "Lord of the Seat" occurs only here (and once elsewhere, in Medhātithi's oeuvre, in the variant epithet *sádaspáti* used of the dual divinities Indra and Agni, I.21.5). Thus "lord of the seat" is not a separate divinity, but the functional descriptor of another god. In our view the god in question is Agni, and the hymn balances the two major constituents of the sacrifice: the verbal portion overseen by the Lord of the Sacred Formulation and the physical portion embodied by Agni, the Lord of the (Ritual) Seat and the conduit for oblations to the gods.

The first part actually says little about the mastery of verbal powers—except by repeating the name Brahmaṇaspati and, strikingly, by calling on that god to make the unnamed poet "a Kakṣīvant," one of the most skilled of Ṛgvedic poets, to whom I.116–126 are ascribed. (Unfortunately, Brahmaṇaspati did not succeed in effecting this transformation, at least judging from the banality of Medhātithi's preserved poems.) Otherwise these first five verses call on the god to help and protect us, especially from hostile speech (vs. 3). Perhaps because the epithet "Lord of the Seat" is a sort of riddle, the second part of the hymn is more explicit about the activities of the divinity who has this title, and the descriptions in verses 7 and, especially, 8 make Agni the clear referent. The final verse (9) begins with another epithet, Narāśaṃsa, also used of Agni elsewhere, as is the adjective "most extensive" (because of the spreading of his smoke), and the final phrase "like one besieging the seat of heaven" can refer to the rising of this smoke toward the sky, taking the oblations with it.

Though, as is generally the case with Medhātithi's work, the phraseology of the hymn is not particularly impressive, and it contains a number of phrases borrowed from other hymns, the complementarity of the two parts and the handling of the riddling second half make this a more pleasing composition than some of the others in this group.

1. O Lord of the Sacred Formulation, make him a possessor of soma, a sounding [/sun-like] one,
   (make him) a Kakṣīvant, who is (also) descended from fire-priests.
2. He who is rich, who smashes afflictions, while finding goods and increasing prosperity,
   let him accompany us, he who is powerful.
3. Let not the (male)diction, the malice of the grudging mortal reach us.
   Guard us, Lord of the Sacred Formulation.

4. That hero is certainly not harmed whom Indra, whom the Lord of the Sacred Formulation,
whom Soma urges on—(though he is) mortal.
5. O Lord of the Sacred Formulation, (protect) him; let Soma and Indra (protect) the mortal:
Let the Priestly Gift protect (him) from difficult straits.

6. The Lord of the Seat, infallible, dear and desirable to Indra,
I have besought for wisdom as our gain.
7. Without whom the sacrifice even of one attentive to poetic inspiration does not succeed,
he drives the team of insightful thoughts.
8. Then he brings to success the preparation of the oblation; he advances the ceremony;
he goes with the libation to the gods.
9. "Praise of men" [/Narāśaṃsa], the boldest, most extensive one did I see—
like one besieging the seat of heaven.

I.19 Agni and the Maruts

Medhātithi Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī

The divinity pairing in this hymn—the fire-god Agni and the stormy troop of Maruts—is an uncommon one and makes little mythological sense and little sense in R̥gvedic ritual (though in later śrauta ritual there is an *Āgnimāruta śastra* recited in the Third Pressing). In fact the pairing exists in this hymn only in its refrain; the first two pādas of each verse are directed at one or the other: Agni in verses 1, 2, and 9, the Maruts in vss. 4–8. All of the Marut verses are structured as definitional relative clauses beginning with *yé* "which ones, those who," following the model of hymns like II.12, and the contents are typical Marut themes. Verse 3 is a curious exception, for pāda b names the All Gods (or "all the gods") though in a context and with a predicate (pāda a) appropriate to the Maruts—and beginning with the same *yé*. Medhātithi also identifies the Maruts with the All Gods elsewhere (I.23.10).

1. Toward this pleasing ceremony you are called, for its protection.
– With the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
2. For no god nor mortal is beyond the will of you who are great.
– With the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
3. Those who know the great airy realm, the All Gods without deceit—
with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
4. Those who chanted the chant, the strong ones, unassailable through their strength—
with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.

5. Those who are resplendent, of terrible form, of good dominion, caring
   for the stranger—
   with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
6. Those who as gods sit in the luminous realm of the firmament, in
   heaven—
   with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
7. Those who make the mountains swing, across the undulating sea—
   with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
8. Those who stretch with their reins across the sea with their strength—
   with the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.
9. Toward you I dispatch the somian honey, for you to drink first.
   – With the Maruts, o Agni, come hither.

I.20 R̥bhus

Medhātithi Kāṇva
8 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn works briskly and efficiently through the marvelous feats accomplished by the R̥bhus, a trio of craftsmen, originally mortal, who attained immortality and a share in the sacrifice by their skilled work. This last achievement is stated clearly in the final verse (8; see also 2c, 5), while verses 2–6 enumerate the separate actions that led to it. Several features give shape to the basic list structure of the hymn. The name of the divine dedicands appears only once, in the exact middle of the hymn (vs. 4c), and the adjective "best conferring treasures" of 1c is opened out into its phrasal syntactic equivalent "confer treasures" in verse 7, providing a loose ring.

1. This praise here has been made for the godly breed by the inspired poets
   by mouth—
   a praise that best confers treasures.
2. Those who fashioned for Indra with mind the two fallow bays yoked by
   speech,
   they attained the sacrifice through their labors.
3. They fashioned for the Nāsatyas an earth-circling, well-naved chariot;
   they fashioned a juice-yielding milk-cow.
4. They whose mantras come true, who aim straight—the R̥bhus—
   made their parents young again through their toil.
5. Your exhilarating drinks have united with Indra accompanied by
   the Maruts
   and with the kingly Ādityas.
6. And this beaker of the god Tvaṣṭar new produced
   you made again into four.

7. On us, on the soma-presser confer treasures, three times seven,
   one after the other, for good lauds.
8. The conveyors secured and by their good work shared in
   the sacrificial share among the gods.

I.21 Indra and Agni

Medhātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

Though Indra and Agni are joint recipients of a certain number of R̥gvedic hymns, they do not form a natural pair (though they do receive a joint offering of soma in the later śrauta ritual, the Aindrāgnagraha), and the hymns to them rarely rise above the commonplace—as is true also for this one.

The first four verses are invocation, calling the two gods to the sacrifice and promising them praise and soma. The two interior verses (2–3) use the lexeme *prá √śaṃs* "proclaim, eulogize," which is later specialized for royal panegyric (the praśastis of classical inscriptions, etc.), and it may have some of that tone here as well. (For royal associations of the lexeme in the R̥gveda, see Jamison 2007: 146–48.) In verse 3 the object of the praśasti is the word *mitrá*; unlike most commentators, we do not believe that this refers to the god Mitra, but rather to the abstract "alliance" that Mitra embodies, a sense that would be appropriate to an official and royal context. The alliance we wish to proclaim may be (as we have translated it here) the alliance between the two gods, joining two distinct aspects of Vedic religion, though it could also be their alliance with us.

Verses 5–6 then suggest what these allies can do for us; the final verse is introduced by the pregnant phrase "by this truth," characteristic of the later *satya-kriyā* or "truth-formulation." Here it presumably refers to the whole preceding hymn as an expression of truth.

1. I call Indra and Agni here. For those two alone we desire a praise hymn.
   They are the best soma-drinkers of soma.
2. Proclaim them at the sacrifices; embellish Indra and Agni, o men.
   Sing to them in songs.
3. We call these two to proclaim their alliance; we call them, Indra and Agni,
   the two soma-drinkers, to drink soma.
4. Those two, though formidable, we will call near to this pressing
   pressed here.
   Let Indra and Agni come right here.
5. As great lords of the seat, Indra and Agni, crush the demonic force.
   Let the voracious ones be without offspring.
6. By this truth be watchful over the footprint of discernment [=ritual
   ground].
   Indra and Agni, extend (us) shelter.

I.22 Various Gods (Aśvins 1–4, Savitar 5–8, Agni 9–10, Gods 11, Indrāṇi, Varuṇānī, Agnāyī 12, Heaven and Earth 13–14, Earth 15, Viṣṇu or Gods 16, Viṣṇu 17–21)

Medhātithi Kāṇva
21 verses: gāyatrī

The Medhātithi group ends with two lengthy hymns to a variety of divinities: the ascriptions of the Anukramaṇī are reproduced above. As Oldenberg points out (1888: 224–25; *Noten* ad loc.), both hymns can easily be broken down into smaller hymns, which then conform to the principles of arrangement in the Saṃhitā. The clear changes of divinity support the division of this hymn into smaller units, although Oldenberg's divisions do not altogether match those of the Anukramaṇī; Oldenberg's are clearly superior: 1–4, 5–8, 9–12, 13–15, 16–18, 19–21.

Like the immediately preceding hymn, the first sections of this one are primarily devoted to invocation of the various gods: the Aśvins in verses 1–4, Savitar in 5–8. In a slight variation on this theme, in verses 9–12 Agni is called upon to bring Tvaṣṭar and the Wives of the Gods to the sacrifice; this divine group figures in a number of minor rites in the Soma Sacrifice (especially the Third Pressing) and elsewhere. The next three verses (13–15) concern Heaven and Earth; the middle verse (14) is the only truly enigmatic one in the hymn. The final six verses (16–21) consist of two tr̥cas to Viṣṇu, which, both by the principles of arrangement and by their phraseology, should be considered two separate hymns. There is no obvious reason, either ritual or mythological, for collecting these particular short compositions in a single super-hymn. As Oldenberg argues, the grouping and order seem to be entirely mechanical.

1. Awaken the two who hitch up early in the morning. Let the Aśvins
   come here,
   to drink of this soma.
2. Those two possessing a good chariot who are the best charioteers, both
   gods who touch heaven,
   the Aśvins we invoke.
3. The honeyed whip that is yours, Aśvins, that has a liberal spirit—
   with that mix the sacrifice.
4. For it is not even a little distance from you, when you come in your
   chariot
   to the house of a man with soma, Aśvins.

5. I call upon golden-palmed Savitar for help.
   He, through his divinity, is attentive to the track.

6. Praise the Child of the Waters, Savitar, for help.
   We desire his commandments.
7. We call upon the apportioner of goods, of brilliant bounty,
   on Savitar, whose eye is on men.
8. Comrades, sit down here: Savitar is now to be praised by us.
   The giver beautifies his bounties.

9. Agni, convey the eager Wives of the Gods here,
   and Tvaṣṭar, for soma-drinking.
10. Agni, youngest one, convey the Wives here for help, and
    Hotrā Bhāratī,
    Varūtrī, Dhiṣaṇā.
11. Let the goddesses, Wives of superior men [=gods], attend upon
    us greatly with help, with shelter—those with unclipped
    wings.
12. Here I call upon Indrāṇī, Varuṇānī for well-being,
    upon Agnāyī for soma-drinking.

13. Let the great ones, Heaven and Earth, mix this sacrifice for us.
    Let them carry us through with their support.
14. The inspired poets lick the ghee-filled milk of this very pair [=Heaven
    and Earth] with their poetic insights,
    in the firm footstep of the Gandharva.
15. Earth, become comfortable, a place to settle down, not sweeping
    men away.
    Extend to us widespread shelter.

16. Let the gods help us from there whence Viṣṇu strode out
    from the earth through the seven domains.
17. Viṣṇu strode out this (world); three times he laid down a step:
    (this world) is concentrated in his dusty (step).
18. He strode three steps, Viṣṇu the undeceivable cowherd,
    founding the foundations from there—

19. Behold the deeds of Viṣṇu: from (the place) where he watches over the
    commandments,
    the partner in yoke with Indra,
20. That is the highest footstep of Viṣṇu. The patrons always
    behold it
    stretched out like the eye [=sun] in heaven.
21. That do the inspired poets, admiring and wakeful, kindle—
    the highest footstep of Viṣṇu.

I.23 Various Gods (Vāyu 1, Indra and Vāyu 2–3, Mitra and Varuṇa 4–6, Indra Marutvant 7–9, All Gods 10–12, Pūṣan 13–15, Waters 16–23ab, Agni 23cd–24)

Medhātithi Kāṇva
24 verses: gāyatrī, except puraüṣṇih 19, anuṣṭubh 20, 22–24, pratiṣṭhā 21, arranged in tr̥cas

Although the principles of hymn arrangement strongly suggest that this twenty-four-verse hymn is a composite, consisting of eight individual tr̥cas, the situation is quite different from the previous hymn, I.22, where the collection was dictated merely and mechanically by the number of verses in each segment, without a particular ritual application. Here the separate tr̥cas follow the order of a structured recitation in the Morning Pressing, later called the Praügaśastra. Other instances of this litany are found in R̥gveda I.2–3 and II.41, and to some extent I.139; for a detailed discussion of the Praügaśastra see the introduction to I.2.

This hymn varies somewhat from the standard Praügaśastra, which has the following divinities in the following order: Vāyu (1), Indra-Vāyu (2), Mitra-Varuṇa (3), Aśvins (4), Indra (5), the All Gods (6), Sarasvatī (7). This hymn lacks the Aśvins in position 4, but in position 5 Indra, instead of being alone, is accompanied by the Maruts, and though the following tr̥ca (vss. 10–12) is ascribed by the Anukramaṇī to the All Gods, it is dominated by the Maruts. Since offering to Indra with the Maruts is made only in the Midday Pressing, and to the Aśvins in the Morning Pressing, perhaps this version of the litany is shifting its focus to the Midday Pressing and to the ritual innovation that extended offering to the Maruts, rather than just Indra, at that pressing. (See further discussion in the introduction to I.165.) Pūṣan is also added after the All Gods (position 6), and instead of the divine river Sarasvatī in position 7 we find the functionally similar Waters.

The first three verses to the waters (16–18) bring the Praügaśastra proper to an end. The last six verses (19–24) are a supplement, in a somewhat Atharvan style, treating the waters as healers and removers of transgressions. These functions of the waters bring to mind the "Final Bath" or *avabhr̥tha* in classical śrauta ritual, in which the sacrificer and his wife wash each other at the conclusion of the sacrifice, and these verses may have been included in this hymn in order to encompass the entire soma-pressing day, from the first offering to Vāyu to the final cleansing. The middle four verses of this sequence (20–23) are also found in a hymn to the waters, X.9.6–9, and the introductory and final verses here (19 and 24) may have been added to create two triplets for this tr̥ca hymn.

As in other of Medhātithi's hymns, the actual contents are fairly simplistic, consisting primarily of invocations to the various gods and invitations to the soma-drinking. Perhaps the most interesting sequence is the tr̥ca to Pūṣan (vss. 13–15), who finds the hidden king and is urged to drive him here "like lost livestock." Most commentators identify this king as Soma, but the thematics and phraseology—particularly the notion of finding and returning a hidden deity—are

much more characteristic of Agni, and we have interpreted these verses in that way. Whether the king is Agni or Soma, however, it is not clear what this snatch of myth is doing here in this hymn, though Pūṣan's ability to locate lost cows is proverbial.

1. Sharp are the soma drinks—come here. Here are the pressings mixed with milk.
   Vāyu, drink those set forth.
2. Both gods who touch the heaven, Indra and Vāyu, do we call,
   to drink of this soma.
3. Indra and Vāyu, mind-swift, do the inspired poets call for help—
   the thousand-eyed lords of insight.

4. Mitra do we call and Varuṇa, for soma-drinking—
   the two born with refined skill.
5. Those who through truth increase by truth, the lords of truth, of light,
   these two, Mitra and Varuṇa, do I call.
6. Varuṇa will become a helper, as will Mitra with all forms of help.
   They will make us well rewarded.

7. We call Indra accompanied by the Maruts here for soma-drinking.
   Along with the troop let him reach satiety.
8. Having Indra as chief, the Maruts as troop, and the gifts of Pūṣan, o gods,
   all of you, hear my call.
9. Smash Vr̥tra, you of good drops [=Maruts/All Gods], with Indra and his might as yokemates.
   Let no defamer hold sway over us.

10. The All Gods we call, the Maruts, for soma-drinking,
    for they are strong, with Pr̥śni as their mother.
11. The thundering of (you) Maruts, like that of victors, goes boldly,
    when, o men, you drive in beauty.
12. Born out of the laughing lightening, from there let them help us;
    let the Maruts be merciful to us.

13. O Pūṣan, glowing one—the buttress of heaven [=Agni?] with his glittering ritual grass—
    drive him here like lost livestock.
14. Pūṣan the glowing has found the king [=Agni], hidden, laid in hiding,
    with his glittering ritual grass.
15. And with drops (of ghee) he will keep driving along to me the six yoked (flames),
    as if plowing a grain(field) with oxen.

16. The motherly ones [=waters], siblings, go along the ritual roads of those who perform the rites,
    mixing the milk with honey.

17. Those (waters) yonder that are close to the sun, or with whom the sun is—
    let them propel our rite.
18. The goddess Waters do I call upon. Wherever our cows drink,
    to the rivers an oblation is to be made.

19. Within the waters is deathlessness, in the waters healing, and (it is right)
    to glorify the waters.
    O gods, become prizewinners.
20. "Within the waters," Soma said to me, "are all healing remedies,
    and Agni who is weal to all." And the waters are healing for all.
21. O Waters, fully grant healing and protection for my body
    and (for me) to see the sun for a long time.

22. O Waters, carry this away, whatever trouble is in me—
    whether I have committed deceit or I have cursed—as well as untruth.
23. O Waters, today I have followed (you). We have united with your sap.
    Full of milk, come here, o Agni. Merge me with luster.
24. Merge me with luster, Agni, with offspring, with long life.
    The gods should know this (hymn?) of mine; Indra should know it
    along with the seers.

As Oldenberg (1888: 225) observes, I.24–30, the Śunaḥśepa hymns, like the preceding Medhātithi hymns (I 12–23), generally follow the organization of the hymns of Maṇḍala VIII. He argues that irregularities in the placement of I.25, 27, and 30 can be explained if these hymns are composites of several hymns.

The story of Śunaḥśepa, the putative poet of these hymns, appears in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa VII 13–18 and Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra XV 17–27. According to the story, King Hariścandra had begged Varuṇa for a son and promised that if Varuṇa gave him one, he would sacrifice his son to the god. A boy, Rohita, was born to Hariścandra, but the king managed to delay the sacrifice of his son until Rohita reached adulthood. When the king could no longer avoid the inevitable sacrifice, he told Rohita that he was to be sacrificed to Varuṇa. But Rohita refused to be the sacrificial victim and departed the kingdom. As a result Hariścandra was struck by dropsy in punishment for not performing the sacrifice.

In his travels Rohita eventually came upon a poor brahmin named Ajīgarta, who sold his son Śunaḥśepa to Rohita to be a substitute sacrificial victim. Rohita returned with Śunaḥśepa and Varuṇa accepted the substitution of Śunaḥśepa for Rohita. But when Śunaḥśepa was bound to the stake and was about to be killed, he appealed to the gods by reciting I.24.1 to Prajāpati, the god Ka (cf. 1a *kásya* "of which (god)?" and 1c *káḥ* "who?"), 24.2 to Agni, 24.3–5 to Savitar, 24.6–15 and I.25 to Varuṇa, I.26 and 27.1–12 to Agni, 27.13 to the All Gods, I.29 and 30.1–16 to Indra, 30.17–19 to the Aśvins, and 30.20–22 to Dawn. Each time Śunaḥśepa recited a verse, one of his bonds was loosened and Hariścandra's belly became smaller. With the last verse Śunaḥśepa was free of his bonds and Hariścandra was free of disease.

Although I.24 refers directly to Śunaḥśepa and to his rescue by Varuṇa, the story of Śunaḥśepa in the form in which it told in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa does not fully correspond to that at the basis of any of the hymns in this collection. Probably closer to the R̥gvedic version is that alluded to in the Yajurveda. Taittirīya Saṃhitā V 2.1.3 and Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā XIX 11 say simply that Śunaḥśepa had been seized by Varuṇa but then rescued himself from Varuṇa's bonds.

I.24 Agni, Savitar, and Varuṇa

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
15 verses: triṣṭubh 1–2, 6–15; gāyatrī 3–5

This hymn consists of three sections in alternating meters, with each section devoted to a different god. The first two verses in triṣṭubh invoke Agni, then verses 3–5 in gāyatrī address Savitar, and finally the remainder of the hymn, once more in triṣṭubh, is dedicated to Varuṇa. Despite this variation the hymn is a coherent composition and not a composite of three hymns wielded together (cf. Oldenberg 1888: 226 n.). Formal evidence for its unity is that Aditi, the goddess who represents Innocence or Guiltlessness, appears in verses 1 and 2 and then again in the last verse, verse 15, creating a ring.

Apparently the poet and his people have been afflicted in some way. In the later Veda dropsy is associated with Varuṇa, and so it could be this or another disease that troubles the sacrificers. The poet believes that the cause of their affliction is that Varuṇa is angry with them for some offense they have committed (cf. vs. 11) and therefore has "bound" them in the bonds of misery.

The first god invoked is Agni, whose presence introduces the ritual that addresses the plight of the sacrificers. The poet already signals the purpose of his hymn and rite by asking which god will return his people to Aditi, to the "Guiltlessness" that the goddess embodies. Aditi is the mother of the Ādityas, and therefore reference to her leads to mention of the poet's own mother and father. The poet implies that because of some offense he might die before his father and mother. That would be tragic and unnatural, since children should not predecease their parents.

There follow the three verses to Savitar, which also mention the god Bhaga "Fortune." Both Savitar and Bhaga are Ādityas, so the poet is still moving toward Varuṇa, the greatest of the Ādityas. In verse 3 the poet asks Savitar for a "portion" (*bhāgá*) of the wealth that Savitar can bring, and this leads in verse 4 to mention of the god Bhaga. In verse 4 the priest performing the rite appears to embody Bhaga because he attains *adveṣáḥ* "freedom from hostility." This "hostility" represents everything that stands in the way of the life and prosperity of the poet, but it also prefigures the anger of Varuṇa, from which the poet hopes for release. The presence of Savitar, who is associated with night, might also suggest

that the rite for which the hymn was composed took place in the evening. In verse 10 also the poet refers to the constellation of Ursa Major and to the moon. But Varuṇa's rule is not restricted to the night, since the poet also says that Varuṇa creates the path for the sun (vs. 8). In verse 7 too the crest of the *nyāgrodha* or banyan tree, which sends down aerial roots, may refer to the sun. This would explain the description of these aerial roots as "beacons" that take root within humans as the light of inspiration (7c). In verse 12a the rule of Varuṇa over both night and day is reflected in the truth spoken to the poet at night and by day. It is a truth toward which the poet's own intuition—perhaps that light received from Varuṇa—has struggled (12b).

However, the poet's concern is not as much with the cosmic roles of Varuṇa as it is with the bondage Varuṇa has inflicted on the poet and his people. The poet looks back to Śunaḥśepa as an example of someone who was bound and then released by Varuṇa. He even merges his own bonds and the bonds of Śunaḥśepa: in 13d the poet's plea to Varuṇa to "release the fetters" refers to Śunaḥśepa's bonds and to the present bonds that afflict him. Once free of those bonds, the poet will be restored to guiltlessness, under the protection of the commandment of Varuṇa (vs. 15).

1. The dear name of which god, of which of the immortals, shall we recall?
   Who will return us to great Aditi [/Guiltlessness]? I would see my father
      and mother.
2. We will recall the dear name of the god Agni, of the first of the
      immortals.
   He will return us to great Aditi. I would see my father and mother.

3. O god Savitar, master of desirable things,
   we implore you for a portion, o you who ever give.
4. For also the one who is Fortune [/Bhaga], laboring correctly for you
      ahead of reproach,
   has received freedom from hatred in his hands.
5. We would reach upward to (a portion) of that apportioned by Bhaga
      through your help,
   in order to take hold of the head of wealth.

6. Yet not even birds flying yonder have attained your rule, power, or fervor,
   nor have these waters moving without blinking, nor those [=the gods]
      who confound the wind's formless mass.
7. In (the airy realm) without a base, King Varuṇa of purified skill firmly
      holds the crest of the (nyāgrodha) tree on high.
   They [=its trunks] reach downward, their base above. They should be set
      down as beacons within us.
8. Since King Varuṇa made a broad path for the sun to follow,
   he has created two feet for the footless (sun) to give it support, and he
      exorcises even what pierces the heart.

9. A hundred healers are yours, o king, a thousand. Let your favor be broad and deep.
   Drive dissolution far away into the distance. Release from us even the guilt we have created.
10. Yonder Bears [=stars of Ursa Major], set on high, are visible at night; they have gone somewhere else by day.
    The commandments of Varuṇa cannot be cheated: the moon goes at night, earnestly looking around.
11. Extolling you with my formulation, I implore this of you; with his offerings the sacrificer hopes for this:
    Become no longer angry now, Varuṇa! O you of wide fame, do not steal away our lifetime!
12. They say to me just this at night, this by day; my intuition looks out here from my heart toward this:
    The one whom Śunaḥśepa called upon when he was seized, let him, King Varuṇa, release us!
13. Since Śunaḥśepa, seized and bound in three stocks, called upon the Āditya,
    King Varuṇa should set him loose. Let him—the knowing one, never cheated—release the fetters.
14. We beg to appease your anger by our acts of reverence, Varuṇa, appease it by our sacrifices and offerings.
    Holding sway, o attentive lord and king, you will loosen for us the guilt we have created.
15. Loosen above the uppermost fetter from us, o Varuṇa, below the lowest, away the midmost.
    Then under your commandment, o Āditya, we would be without offense for Aditi [/Guiltlessness].

I.25 Varuṇa

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
21 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

Oldenberg suggests that the first four tṛcas of this hymn (vss. 1–12) originally formed one hymn, and the last three (vss. 13–21), a second one. One indication of this division is that verse 12 reads like a concluding verse. Thematically, however, the two parts of the hymn both emphasize the sovereignty of Varuṇa, and the hymn as a whole begins (3a) and ends (19b) with an appeal for his mercy. So if this is a composite hymn, it is nonetheless a coherent one.

One repeated pattern in this hymn is the movement from Varuṇa's distance, which can mark his displeasure, to his closeness. The first tṛca, for example, fears

the offense that the poet might have given Varuṇa and the anger of the god. In the second the poet speaks of his songs, which will dispel the god's fury, and his hopes that he will bring Varuṇa near (5). He concludes that Mitra and Varuṇa are never far from one who serves them (6c). The closeness of Varuṇa is again the theme of the fifth tr̥ca (vss. 13–15), which opens the second part of the hymn. Varuṇa first appears in majesty, wearing the mantle of a king (13a), but at the same time, like a king, he is also very near. His spies are everywhere (13c) and no deceit or evildoing escapes his attention (14). The last verse of the tr̥ca combines his majesty and his presence. In verse 15 the poet repeats *ā́* "here" three times at the end of each of its three pādas, culminating in the unexpected and dramatic assertion that Varuṇa's glory is "right here within our bellies." We understand the presence of Varuṇa's glory in the belly as signifying the radical closeness of Varuṇa, but there are other ways of interpreting it. The reference to "bellies" has led Geldner, for example, to understand this as a healing hymn for dropsy, a disease associated with Varuṇa. The final plea for release from fetters, which occurs also as the last verse of I.24, offers support for this interpretation. Nevertheless, we regard it as unlikely. It does not suit the context of verse 15, and the fact that verse 21 is the final verse of the preceding hymn implies that it is a formal conclusion, not a critical thematic statement.

The same movement from distance to proximity also occurs in the sixth tr̥ca. In its first verse (16) the poet says his insights go far away, looking for Varuṇa; in its last (18) the poet sees Varuṇa and his chariot here on earth. The middle verse is obscure, although in one way or another it describes the movement of the god and the poet toward one another, since the poet asks the god to come to an agreement with him. The "honey" the poet serves is probably not soma, even though soma is often called "honey" or "honeyed." Since the poet begins the tr̥ca with a reference to his "insights," the honey in verse 17 is more likely his song, for speech also can be "honeyed" (cf. I.78.5). More difficult is the honey that is brought to the poet by the god. Perhaps it is the rain, which can also be "honey" (III.62.16, V.69.2ab), and perhaps too the waters and the rain are the visible signs of Varuṇa's presence that the poet sees according to verse 18. Varuṇa's control over the rain is an aspect of his kingship: compare VII.49.3, "In the middle of which king Varuṇa travels, looking down upon the truth and falsehood of the peoples, / those, clear and pure, that drip honey—let those waters, goddesses, help me here."

1. Even if every day we confound your commandment, o god Varuṇa,
   as clans (do their king's commandment),
2. Do not subject us to your deadly weapon when you are enraged,
   nor to your fury when you are angry.
3. For your mercy we would unbind your thought (from such anger), like a
   charioteer a horse that has been tied,
   by our songs, Varuṇa.

4. For my fury-dispelling (songs) fly afar to seek a better thing,
like birds toward their nests.
5. When will we attract broad-gazing Varuṇa—the superior man, glorious in his rule—
to gain his mercy?
6. The two [=Mitra and Varuṇa] have attained just that (rule) in common. Keeping watch, they do not keep to a distance
for the pious man who upholds their commandments.

7. He who knows the track of birds flying through the midspace,
knows the (courses of the) boats, since he belongs to the sea.
8. He whose commandments are upheld knows the twelve months and their offspring [=the half-months];
he knows the one that is born afterward [=the thirteenth month].
9. He knows the trail of the wind—of the broad, towering, and lofty (wind);
he knows those [=the Maruts] who sit upon it.

10. He whose commandments are upheld, Varuṇa sat down among the dwelling places,
for the sake of his universal kingship—he whose resolve is strong.
11. From there, watchful, he looks upon all (deeds), unmistakable (to him)—
both those done and those that must be done.
12. Of strong resolve, the Āditya will make for us easy paths throughout the days.
He will extend our lifetimes.

13. Wearing a golden mantle, Varuṇa dons his cloak.
His spies have seated themselves all around.
14. The god whom those inclined to deceit do not try to deceive, nor do the deceitful ones among men,
nor do the hostile plotters,
15. And who has created glory here for himself—and not by halves!—among the sons of Manu,
right here within our bellies.

16. My insights go afar, like cows going after pasture-lands,
seeking him of broad gaze.
17. Let us two now again come to an agreement as soon as (your) honey has been brought here to me,
(for me) to serve up my own dear (honey) like a Hotar.
18. Now I see him, lovely for all to see; I see his chariot upon the earth.
He enjoys these songs of mine.

19. Now hear my call, Varuṇa, and today have mercy.
    It is you whom I desire, seeking help.
20. You, wise one, rule over all, both heaven and earth.
    Listen in response to my entreaty.
21. Release above the uppermost fetter from us, unbind away the midmost,
    (loosen) below those lowest, in order for us to live.

I.26 Agni

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
10 verses: gāyatrī

On the surface this is a simple and straightforward Agni hymn, in part assembled from pre-made phrases, but in its development it traces an argument below the surface that leads to some surprising conclusions. The argument begins in verse 3 by drawing attention to the mutuality of relationships (friend–friend, comrade–comrade), *even* of those between hierarchically arranged pairs (father/son). The poet then points out the comradeship between us and Agni (vs. 5), which leads to the balanced construction of verse 7, again emphasizing the mutual relationship between us and Agni: he is dear to us and we to him. That this relationship is also hierarchical is gently implied by identifying him as our clanlord. By picking up the final term in verse 7, the multivalent word *svagní*, which can mean both "having good fires" and "having good Agni," and deploying it, again in a balanced construction, in verse 8, the poet subtly shifts to making the gods our partners, not merely Agni, who has become merely the token of this relationship between us and the gods. The hierarchical distance has been increased, but only step-by-step. The climax (however underplayed) comes in verse 9, which calls for mutual encomia (*práśasti*) between mortals and immortals—in other words, it demands that immortals produce praise for us, as we do for them. The word *práśasti* is a charged one, referring to the formal praise of kings as well as gods (see Jamison 2007: 146–48; see also I.21 above). Though the conceptual development of the hymn is quite uninsistent, and the simple rhythms of the gāyatrī meter can lull the audience into inattention, the end result, when examined, is quite radical.

1. Put on your garments, you partaker of the sacrificial meal and lord of
       nourishments,
   and so perform this rite for us.
2. Take your seat as our Hotar, worthy to be chosen by our thoughts
   and heaven-bound speech, o youngest Agni.
3. For a father always sacrifices on behalf of his son, a friend on behalf of
       his friend,
   a comrade worth choosing on behalf of his comrade.

4. Let Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman, who care for the stranger, take their seats here on our ritual grass, as if (on that) of Manu.
5. O ancient Hotar, rejoice in this (ritual grass) and in our comradeship; listen well to these songs here.
6. For even when we sacrifice to god after god in unbroken succession, it is just in you that the oblation is poured.
7. Let him be our dear clanlord—the delighting Hotar worthy to be chosen; let us be dear (to him) and (so) possess good fires.
8. Since the gods have good Agni (among them) and established him as a choice thing for us, we consider ourselves to possess good fires [/Agni].
9. So then, of us both, mortals (and immortals), o immortal one, let there be encomia each for the other.
10. O Agni, along with all the fires, take delight in this sacrifice and in this speech, o young (son) of strength.

I.27 Agni (1–12), Gods (13)

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
13 verses: gāyatrī, except triṣṭubh 13

This second Agni hymn in the Śunaḥśepa collection is longer than the first (I.26), and is therefore likely to be a composite. This conjecture is supported by the metrical evidence, in that verses 1–6 and 10–12 are in trochaic gāyatrī, while the intervening verses 7–9 have no trochaic pādas. These three verses (7–9) are also thematically unified by a focus on a mortal, aided by Agni, who seeks a prize.

The rest of the hymn is more diffuse in content and surprisingly awkward in phraseology. The final verse (13), in triṣṭubh, makes no mention of Agni and may have been tacked onto this already loosely structured assemblage because its signature word *námas* "reverence" matches the last word of the first hemistich of verse 1, *námobhiḥ* "with reverences."

1. (This is) to extol you, Agni, with reverences—you bringing choice things [/long-tailed] like a horse, ruling over the rites completely.
2. Might the son (of strength) by his strength, very kindly, of broad advance, become our benefactor.
3. Both from afar and from nearby, from the mortal who wishes ill protect us always, you who last a whole lifetime.
4. This, our winnings, our newer song, you shall proclaim among the gods, o Agni.

5. Give us a share in the furthest prizes, in the midmost ones;
seek mastery over the closest good thing (for us).
6. You are the apportioner, o bright-beamed one. (As if) on the wave of a river, in the nearness
and all at once you stream for the pious man.
7. The mortal whom you will help in battles, o Agni, whom you will spur on to the prizes,
he will hold fast to unfailing refreshments.
8. No one will circumscribe anything of his, o overpowering one:
there is a prize worthy of fame (for him).
9. Let him, belonging to all domains, be the one who overtakes the prize with his steeds.
Together with the inspired poets let him be the winner.
10. Awake and sing! Bring this about: for the one worthy of sacrifice for every clan,
for Rudra [=Agni], a praise song that is beauty to be seen.
11. Let him who is great without measure, much glittering but possessing a beacon of smoke,
urge us on to insight and to the prize.
12. Like a rich clanlord, let the divine beacon listen to us
along with our hymns—Agni of lofty radiance.
13. Reverence to the great ones and reverence to the small; reverence to the young and reverence to those advanced (in years).
Let us offer sacrifice to the gods if we will be able. Let me not twist away the laud for one more powerful in my direction, o gods.

I.28 Indra (1–4), the Mortar (5–6), the Mortar and Pestle (7–8), Prajāpati Hariścandra or the Soma-Pressing Hide (9)

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
9 verses: triṣṭubh 1–6, gāyatrī 7–9

This brief and somewhat racy hymn has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Most scholarly treatments are more or less in agreement with Geldner's interpretation, signaled already in his title "Die vereinfachte Somapressung" (The Simplified Soma-Pressing). In this interpretation the hymn depicts an abbreviated soma-pressing done at home, on the spur of the moment and without formality, by a sacrificer and his wife, using normal household implements, the mortar (*ulū́khala*) and pestle, to pound the soma stalks. The participation of the wife occasioned the slightly salacious comparisons between the pounding and sexual intercourse. A woman, presumably the wife, is mentioned explicitly once, in a word play that implicitly compares her regular movements in wielding the mortar with rhythmic sexual movement (vs. 3).

Despite the weight of scholarly opinion, we consider this literal interpretation quite unlikely, because the precious and prized substance soma, the focus of the most elaborate non-royal rites, can hardly have been used for a slapdash, playful domestic entertainment. Instead, this hymn should be considered together with a number of others in the late R̥gveda in which women figure in controversial or contested roles (e.g., I.179, X.10, X.102, X.109). In our view (see Jamison 2011, forthcoming a, forthcoming b, in addition to background in 1996a), the late R̥gveda saw the introduction of a new ritual model, in which the Wife of the Sacrificer participated in the ritual along with her husband and the other male functionaries. This innovation was, we believe, being bitterly debated by theologians in this period, and the debate can be discerned beneath the surface of such hymns.

This particular hymn alludes to the new ritual model incorporating the Sacrificer's Wife by presenting the solemn soma-pressing *as if it were* a domestic procedure, utilizing tools to be found in every kitchen, the proper domain of the Wife. An implicit identification between domestic paraphernalia and that of solemn ritual is found already in the first verse, where the standard high-ritual word for the pressing stone (*grā́van*) is juxtaposed with that for the domestic mortar (*ulū́khala*). (See also Atharvaveda IX.6.15 with the same identification: *yā́ny ulūkhalamusalā́ni grā́vāṇa evá té* "the mortar and pestle—they are the pressing stones," in a hymn that systematically presents a series of such statements.) The final verse (9) returns to technical terms for soma equipment in solemn ritual (*camū́* "cup"; *pavítra* "filter"; *gór ádhi tvací* "upon the hide of the cow"), thus affirming that a *real* soma sacrifice has indeed been performed. Perhaps the most important technical term in that verse is *śiṣṭá* (in the sandhi sequence *úc chiṣṭám* < *úd* + *śiṣṭám*; cf. later *úcchiṣṭa* "leftover"): in later śrauta ritual the Wife is particularly active in the Third Pressing and the soma offered there is "left-over" soma. We thus see the ritual notion of the "leftover" already associated with the Wife here.

Since one of the aims of introducing the Sacrificer's Wife into ritual was to inject sexuality and fertility into the previously sterile realm of sacrifice, the double-entendres throughout the hymn have a (semi-)serious purpose. As often with sexual phraseology, the exact intent is sometimes difficult to figure out (e.g., vs. 6).

And what does our poet think about the new model? Although treating the soma-pressing as if it were a cooking demonstration might seem to debase and desolemnize it, the cheerful tone and the reassuring presence of Indra, the consummate soma-drinker (who also seems to favor the introduction of the Wife in other hymns), appears to indicate approval of the ritual innovation.

1. When the pressing stone with its broad bottom becomes erect in order
   to press,
   you, Indra, will keep gulping down the mortar-pressed (soma drops).
2. When the pair of pressing boards are formed like two buttocks,
   you, Indra, will keep gulping down the mortar-pressed (soma drops).
3. When the woman puts her best into thrusting back and forth,
   you, Indra, will keep gulping down the mortar-pressed (soma drops).

4. When they bind the churning stick on both sides like reins to control it,
   you, Indra, will keep gulping down the mortar-pressed (soma drops).
5. For even though you are hitched up in house after house, little mortar,
   here speak most brilliantly, like the drum of victors.
6. And, o lord of the wood [=pestle?], the wind blows through your top.
   So then, press the soma for Indra to drink, o mortar.
7. These two [=mortar and pestle? / jaws of the soma press?] gain by sacrifice and are the best prizewinners, since they keep pulling apart above,
   chewing the stalks like a pair of fallow bays.
8. Today, you two lords of the wood, towering, with the towering pressers
   press our honeyed (drink) for Indra.
9. Bring what is leftover up into the two wooden cups. Send the soma surging into the filter.
   Put it down upon the hide of the cow.

I.29 Indra

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
7 verses: paṅkti

The last three pādas of each five-pāda verse in this hymn constitute a refrain begging Indra to give us hope of acquiring abundant livestock. The refrain fits well in the first two verses, but then the hymn takes an odd turn, expressing increasing hostility toward a variety of unidentified or unidentifiable (see the near hapaxes in vss. 6–7) beings, while continuing to hope blandly for cows and horses in the refrain. The hymn is reminiscent of the "sleep charm" (VII.55), though the latter is more benign in intent, and I.29 also has an Atharvan cast.

1. Even when we are devoid of hope, as it were, o you true drinker of soma,
   give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o powerfully generous Indra.
2. O you of the (lovely) lips, you potent lord of prizes—with your wondrous skill
   give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o powerfully generous Indra.
3. Put to sleep the two of opposite appearance [=birds of ill-omen?]; let those two females sleep unawakening.
   – Give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o powerfully generous Indra.

4. Let them sleep who offer no gifts, but let your gifts be awake, o
   champion.
   – Give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o
   powerfully generous Indra.
5. Pulverize the donkey braying in that evil way, o Indra.
   – Give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o
   powerfully generous Indra.
6. Along with the female *kuṇḍr̥ṇācī* [=bird of ill-omen?] the wind will fly far
   away from the woods.
   – Give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o
   powerfully generous Indra.
7. Smash every howler; crush the female *kr̥kadāśū* [=another bird of ill-omen?].
   – Give us hope for resplendent cows and horses in the thousands, o
   powerfully generous Indra.

I.30 Indra (1–16), Aśvins (17–19), Dawn (20–22)

Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
22 verses: gāyatrī, except triṣṭubh 16, arranged in tr̥cas

The first five tr̥cas (vss. 1–15) are dedicated to Indra, with the following verse (16), in a different meter, serving as a summary verse for this, the major part of the hymn. There follow one tr̥ca (vss. 17–19) dedicated to the Aśvins and one (vss. 20–22) to Dawn. All of these gods are, of course, associated with the rituals of early morning.

Although the contents of the hymn are fairly standard—praise and invitation to the gods and requests for their help and gifts—the syntax can be fussy and tricky. See especially the final tr̥ca to Indra (vss. 13–15), whose structure and import are not entirely clear. The portion of the hymn devoted to Indra focuses especially on the mutuality of our relationship as his comrades (see esp. vss. 6–12), and the theme of prizes and prize contests is prominent as well.

1. As (we) seek the victory prize for you, with (soma) drops I sprinkle Indra
   like a blood-red (horse)—
   most bounteous (Indra) of a hundred resolves.
2. The (soma), which is a hundred pure (draughts) or a thousand mixed
   with milk,
   flows here as if into the deep.
3. When they come together for the exhilaration of the tempestuous one,
   just by that in his belly
   he acquires an expanse like the sea.

4. This (soma) here is yours: you rush to it like a dove to its nest.
   I shall also solemnly proclaim this speech of ours.

5. You whose praise song it is—o lord of bounties, o hero whose vehicle is songs—
let your liberality be extensive.
6. Stand erect to help us at this prize-contest, o you of a hundred resolves.
Let us make pledge to each other at the other (contests).

7. At every hitching up (for battle), at every prize-contest we call to the more powerful one—
as his comrades (we call) to Indra for help.
8. Surely he will come—when he will hear it—with his thousandfold forms of help,
with the victory prizes, to our call.
9. Following the (custom) of your ancient house, I call upon the excellent man, powerful in opposition,
upon whom your father before called.

10. We hope for you, o much-called-upon granter of all requests,
o good comrade for the singers—
11. O soma-drinker among us (well-)lipped soma-drinkers,
o mace-wielding comrade among (us, your) comrades.
12. Just so let it be, o soma-drinker; o mace-wielding comrade, make it just so
as we wish for you to want it.

13. Let there be rich (refreshments?) bringing powerful prizes for us for our joint exhilaration in company with Indra—
(refreshments) with which we, rich in livestock, might reach exhilaration.
14. As one like you, o bold one, obtained in person for the praisers, being implored (by them),
you fit out (the refreshments) (as you) fit an axle between two wheels,
15. When you fit out your friendship and fit out the desire of the singers, o you of a hundred resolves,
with your abilities, (as you fit) the axle.

16. With his (horses) constantly snorting, bellowing, and panting, again and again Indra has conquered the stakes.
He of wondrous skill (has given) us a golden chariot—he the winner for us to win (it)—he has given it to us.

17. O Aśvins, drive here with your drink providing powerful refreshment and accompanied by horses
(along your circuit) that brings cows and gold, o wondrous ones.
18. For your immortal chariot, (always) taking the same route,
speeds upon the sea, o wondrous Aśvins.

19. You two anchored (one) wheel of your chariot on the head of the
    inviolable (bull);
    the other speeds around heaven.

20. Which mortal is to enjoy you, o immortal Dawn, you fair-weather friend?
    To whom will you come near, far-radiant one?
21. For we have brought you to mind from both near and far,
    o you, dappled bright and ruddy like a mare.
22. Come here with these prizes, o daughter of heaven.
    Lay wealth as a foundation for us.

The next five hymns (31–35) are attributed to Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa, and include one of the most famous hymns in the R̥gveda, I.32, the great Indra-Vr̥tra hymn, and several that deserve more fame than they have, especially I.33, a mirror-image companion piece to I.32.

I.31 Agni

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
18 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8, 16, 18

A rigid verse-initial sequence provides an obvious skeletal structure for this hymn: each of the first fifteen verses opens with *tvám agne* "you, o Agni" (or minor variants thereupon). The remaining three verses (16–18) maintain the second-position vocative *agne*, but place other items in first position—a typical loosening of structure toward the end of a hymn.

Superimposed on this strict repetition is a less insistent structure of thematic ring composition. The opening of the hymn (vss. 1–4) treats the primal installation of Agni in the sacrifice, a theme reinforced by the word *prathamáḥ* "first" stationed after the first two words in verses 1–3. Demigods and legendary ancestral mortals are named in these verses, and some of them return in verse 17, the last verse before the summary verse (18), in which Agni is explicitly urged to perform the same actions for us as he did for them in earlier times. In between is the ritual here-and-now. Verses 5–8 detail the aid that Agni gives to a devoted priest in the ritual. In verses 9–11 Agni's relationship to his worshiper is depicted more expansively: he is a father to us with all of a father's care, but, in a paradox much loved by Vedic bards, Agni is also a son, both of the kindling sticks (vs. 9) and of the priests who wield those sticks (vs. 11). Verse 11 connects the primal creation of Agni treated at the beginning of the hymn with the current ritual, in which Agni is the son of "a father as trifling as me."

The remainder of the hymn (esp. vss. 12–15) begs for Agni's protection for the sacrificer and his group, and continues the themes both of Agni's paternal care (vss.

14, 16) and the weakness and unworthiness of those he cares for (vss. 13–14). The poet cleverly uses this acknowledged weakness to his advantage by asking Agni to forgive and forget what we have done wrong in the ritual (vs. 16). There follows the ring-compositional reminiscence of Agni's primal installation (vs. 17). As often, the final verse (18) is somewhat extra-hymnic, in that it sums up the hymn that precedes with an introductory formula, *eténa... bráhmaṇā* "through this sacred formulation," designed to simulate Agni's favor.

1. You, Agni, the first Aṅgiras, the seer, the god, became a kindly comrade of the gods.
   Under your commandment were born the sage poets working with their know-how—the Maruts with glinting spears.
2. You, Agni, first and best of the Aṅgirases, as sage poet you tend to the commandment of the gods,
   extending to all creation, wise, (and though) having (just) two mothers, lying down in so many places for Āyu.
3. You, Agni—first become manifest to Mātariśvan; with a display of your good resolve (become manifest) to Vivasvant.
   The two world-halves trembled at the choice of (you as) Hotar. You tolerated the burden; you sacrificed to the great ones, o good one.
4. You, Agni, made heaven bellow for Manu, for Purūravas; for him of good action [=sacrificer? priest?] you act (even) better,
   when through your swelling in your two parents [=the kindling sticks] you are set free. They [=priests] have led you here to the east, then again to the west.
5. You, Agni, a bull increasing prosperity, should be celebrated by the (priest) who holds up the offering spoon,
   who knows his way around the poured offering and the *vaṣaṭ*-cry—you who, throughout your single lifetime, seek to attract the (divine) clans at the beginning (of the sacrifice).
6. You, Agni, in fellowship at the ceremony safely bring the man on the twisting turns (of the ritual "racecourse") to the end, o unbounded one,
   you who—at the contest of champions, at the crucial turn, when the stake (is set)—even with just a few you smash the greater in the clash.
7. You, Agni, establish that mortal in highest immortality for fame day after day,
   you who, yourself thirsting, create refreshment for both breeds [=men and gods] and a pleasurable meal here for the patron.
8. You, Agni—for us to win the stakes, make our bard glorious while you are being praised.
   Might we bring to fulfillment the (ritual) act through a new (poetic) worker. O Heaven and Earth, along with the gods—help us.

9. You, Agni, in the lap of your two parents, the god wakeful among the gods, o faultless one—
   become body-creator [=father] and (fatherly) solicitude for our bard. You, lovely one, have strewn every good thing here.
10. You, Agni, are (fatherly) solicitude, you a father to us. You are creator of vitality; we are your kin.
   Riches in hundreds, in thousands converge on you, the well-heroed protector of the commandment, o undeceivable one.
11. You, Agni, did the gods create as the first Āyu for Āyu, as the clanlord of Nahuṣa.
   Iḍā they created as instructress of mankind: that the son [=Agni] is born of a father as trifling as me [=sacrificer].
12. You, god Agni—along with your protectors, watch over our benefactors and ourselves, o you to be extolled.
   You are the guardian over the lineage of offspring and cattle, unblinkingly watchful in accord with your commandment.
13. You, Agni, are kindled as intimate protector, four-eyed, for the worshipful one who lacks even a quiver,
   you who, with the bestowed oblation, for nourishment safe from wolves even for the weak, win this mental spell (for him) with your mind.
14. You, Agni, (are kindled as protector) for the cantor chanting far and wide. What is the highest legacy worth seeking—that you win (for him).
   Even of the feeble you are called (fatherly) solicitude and father. You instruct the simple, (instruct) the quarters, as the one who knows better.
15. You, Agni, like (well-)stitched armor, protect all around the man whose priestly gift has been proffered.
   Whoever (as host), serving sweet food, providing a comfortable place in his dwelling, performs the sacrifice of a living thing, he is the very measure of heaven.
16. This (ritual) breach of ours, Agni—make it forgotten; make us forget this way which we have come on from afar.
   You are friend, father, solicitude for those offering soma, a whirling creator of seers for mortals.
17. As (you did) for Manu, o Agni, as for Aṅgiras, o Aṅgiras, as for Yayāti, as (you did) earlier, o flame,
   drive here to your seat; convey hither the heavenly folk; make them sit on the ritual grass and, you, perform sacrifice to the beloved.
18. Through this sacred formulation, o Agni, keep growing strong—the one that we have made for you by skill or by knowledge.
   And lead us forth toward a better state; join us with your benevolence conferring prizes.

I.32 Indra

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This justly famous hymn tells of Indra's most significant victory, his triumph over Vr̥tra and the release of the waters, in perhaps the clearest treatment of this primal myth in the R̥gveda. Vr̥tra was a gigantic cobra who lay coiled around a mountain within which all the waters were entrapped. In his battle with Indra, Vr̥tra spread his "shoulders," his cobra's hood, and struck at Indra with his fangs, but Indra finally killed Vr̥tra with his mace, broke open the mountain, and let the waters pour out. They then flowed to Manu (vs. 8), who was the first sacrificer, and by implication to his descendants. Vr̥tra's name means "obstacle," and this victory over "Obstacle" is therefore paradigmatic for Indra's victory over all obstacles.

Despite the relative clarity of the treatment of the Vr̥tra battle, the hymn has a curious structure, obsessively circling around and alternately focusing in on and drawing back from the moment of dramatic confrontation between the adversaries. After the initial verses of summary and the preliminaries to the battle (vss. 1–4), the next three verses (5–7) depict the battle, and it is portrayed as extremely one-sided, with the overconfident Vr̥tra overmatched from the beginning and decisively smashed by Indra. (The signature verb of the first section of the hymn is √*han* "smash, smite.") Defeated and dismembered, Vr̥tra lies there (the signature verb of this section is √*śī* "lie") with his mother, and the released waters flow over them (8–11). After this interlude the hymn returns to a new description of the battle (12–13), which in this reprise is depicted as far more of an even match. Vr̥tra strikes at Indra with his fangs and deploys various natural forces against his adversary. This more equal battle is encapsulated in the perfectly balanced construction *índraś ca yád yuyudhā́te áhiś ca* "when Indra and the serpent fought each other. . . " (13c). It is unclear why the first triumphalist account has been revised to the more ambiguous, less glorious version—though both, of course, end with Vr̥tra's defeat.

The most mysterious part of this hymn is the conclusion. Vr̥tra is dead, and even his mother Dānu has been killed, so there is no possibility of a new Vr̥tra. And yet Indra apparently becomes terrified and flies across the rivers "like a frightened falcon." Perhaps this puzzling ending is related to the second version of the battle, in which Indra does not have quite the unchallenged heroic role that he plays in the first version. The poet does not explain but in the last verse simply returns to a praise of Indra as victor and king.

1. Now I shall proclaim the heroic deeds of Indra, those foremost deeds
   that the mace-wielder performed:
   He smashed the serpent. He bored out the waters. He split the bellies of
   the mountains.
2. He smashed the serpent resting on the mountain—for him Tvaṣṭar had
   fashioned the resounding [/sunlike] mace.

Like bellowing milk-cows, streaming out, the waters went straight down to the sea.

3. Acting the bull, he chose for his own the soma. He drank of the pressed soma among the Trikadrukas [=the Maruts?].
   The generous one took up his missile, the mace. He smashed him, the first-born of serpents.
4. When you, Indra, smashed the first-born of serpents and then beguiled the wiles of the wily ones,
   then, giving birth to the sun, the heaven, and the dawn, since that time you have surely never found a rival.
5. Indra smashed Vr̥tra [/Obstacle] the very great obstacle, whose shoulders were spread apart, with his mace, his great weapon.
   Like logs hewn apart by an axe, the serpent would lie, embracing the earth [/soaking the earth (with his blood)].
6. For, like a drunken non-warrior, he challenged the hard-pressing great hero whose is the silvery drink [=soma].
   (Vr̥tra) did not withstand the attack of his weapons. His mouth destroyed by the shattering blow, he whose rival was Indra was completely crushed.
7. Handless and footless, he gave battle to Indra. (Indra) smashed his mace upon his back.
   A steer who tried to be the measure of a bull, Vr̥tra lay there, flung apart in many places.
8. *Delivering themselves to Manu, the waters go over him like a split reed—lying in that way.
   Those very ones whom Vr̥tra in his greatness once surrounded—at *their* feet lay the serpent.
9. The strength of Vr̥tra's mother ebbed; Indra bore his weapon down upon her.
   The mother was above; the son below: Dānu lies like a milk-cow with her calf.
10. In the middle of the turning posts of the never-standing, never-resting (waters), his body sank down.
    The waters move widely over the private parts of Vr̥tra. He whose rival was Indra lay there in the long darkness (of death).
11. The waters stood still—their husband was the Dāsa; their herdsman, the serpent—hemmed in like the cows by the Paṇi.
    What was the hidden opening for the waters—that Indra uncovered after he smashed Vr̥tra.
12. You, Indra, then became the tail of a horse when he struck his fangs at you—you, the god alone.
    You conquered the cows, and, o champion, you conquered the soma. You set loose the seven rivers to flow.

13. Neither the lightning nor the thunder, neither the mist nor the hail that he scattered repelled (Indra) for him.
    When Indra and the serpent fought each other, the generous one achieved victory also for (all) later times.
14. Whom did you see, Indra, as the avenger of the serpent when fear came into your heart after you smashed him,
    and when you crossed over the ninety-nine flowing rivers, like a frightened falcon through the airy realms?
15. Bearing the mace in his arms, Indra is the king of him who travels and of him who is settled, of the horned and the hornless.
    And just he alone as king rules over the different peoples: like a rim the spokes of a wheel, he encompasses those.

I.33 Indra

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn to Indra follows directly upon what is probably the most famous R̥gvedic hymn to Indra, I.32, which is entirely focused on the Vr̥tra battle, and it is attributed to the same poet. The second of the pair, I.33, has attracted far less attention than its famous sibling, which is a pity, for its poetry is often stirring, and it also provides a complementary companion piece to I.32. While I.32 pits Indra against a demonic adversary in single combat, in a world in which humans and their concerns are entirely absent (save for the poet's introduction "I proclaim" in vs. 1 and the celebration of Indra's kingship in the final vs. 15), the human world and human strife are the core of I.33. This focus on the human is clear from the beginning of the hymn. The poet exhorts himself and his fellows to go right up to Indra and demand goods from him (vss. 1–3). The interaction between god and mortals lacking in I.32 is thus immediately established in I.33.

The center of the hymn (vss. 4–10ab, in our view) describes a pitched and desperate conflict between human moieties, in which Indra intervenes on the side of the good. Thus, unlike the battle in I.32, where the contestants are unequally matched from the start (though a more equal match-up is depicted in the second version of the conflict), in I.33 the clashing sides begin in balance, having separated from each other (vs. 4cd) in order to fight each other. At issue is fundamental social organization: sacrificers versus non-sacrificers (4d, 5b), who lack the *vratá*s ("commandments," 5d) that bind the sacrificers. The non-sacrificers are several times identified as *dásyu* (4a, 7c, 9d, curiously always in the singular), and so this hymn may depict the conflict between indigenous peoples and the infiltrating Ārya. However, the non-sacrificers may instead be Ārya following different customs, with Dasyu simply a nasty insult hurled at a larger kin-group that deviates from the social behavior of the R̥gvedins. Their mutual departure in opposite directions from a single place (4c) may argue for the latter view: these

are not foes who encountered each other as one group expanded into the territory of the other, but apparently a once unified group that split. (Verse 18 of the difficult hymn X.27 is phraseologically close to this verse, and suggests even more strongly that the groups have split over doctrinal matters.) Also in favor of this view is the fact that the poet tends to treat the hostile sides in balanced constructions, sometimes allotting alternating pādas to each (e.g., vs. 6, where in our view 6a describes the enemies, 6b the Navagvas who are ordinarily clients of Indra, with 6cd returning to the enemies) or in bipartite phrases (e.g., 7a "those wailing and those laughing"). Indra quickly takes the side of the sacrificers, "the presser and the praiser" (7d), and his aid proves decisive—though not before the poet produces some striking images, for instance, of the enemies girdling themselves in earth, perhaps a reference to their wounding or death, while Indra's own side is clothed with the sun (vs. 9).

After this substantial and sustained treatment of this dramatic human conflict and Indra's part in it, the rest of the hymn turns into a sort of catalogue of allusions to other triumphs of Indra, not all of which are clear. Verse 10d must surely depict the Vala myth, but the *vájra* ("mace") of 10c does not fit that myth well and may be a glancing reference to the Vr̥tra battle, which seems to be treated, though without naming Vr̥tra, in verse 11, and by name in verse 13. Other enemies are defeated in verse 12, including one, with the curious name Ilībiśa, known only from here, and other clients are aided in verses 14–15. The final half-verse of 15 may return to the massed enemies of the central part of the hymn, though that view cannot be strongly supported.

1. Come on! Let us go up close to Indra, seeking cattle. Will he increase his solicitude for us?
   With no one to hinder him, will he perhaps then turn his distant intention toward us for this wealth, for cattle?
2. I fly close to the unopposable giver of wealth, like a falcon to its delightful dwelling,
   doing homage to Indra with my best chants, the one who is to be invoked by praisers on his journey.
3. Fully armed, he has laden himself down with quivers; he herds together the cows of the stranger, of whomever he wishes to.
   Keep poking out valuable things in abundance, Indra—don't be a niggard, (at a distance) from us, you strengthened one.
4. For you smashed the wealthy Dasyu with your deadly weapon, going it alone, (though accompanied) by your assistants [=Maruts?], Indra.
   From the high plain they went apart in opposite directions; the non-sacrificing old codgers made their departure.
5. They just twisted their heads off, Indra—the non-sacrificers contending with the sacrificers.
   O strong horse-possessing (chariot-)mounter, when (you came) forth from heaven, you blasted those who follow no commandment in the two world-halves.

6. They wished to battle the army of the faultless one; the Navagva peoples marshaled themselves.
   Like castrated bullocks battling with a bull, they seemed to go away from Indra along slippery slopes.
7. You set them to fighting, those wailing and those laughing, on the far edge of the dusky realm, Indra.
   From heaven on high you sent fire burning down on the Dasyu; you favored the recitation of the presser and the praiser.
8. Having made for themselves a girdle from the earth, adorning themselves with a golden amulet,
   (though) urging themselves on, they did not overtake Indra. He clothed his spies with the sun.
9. When, Indra, you coiled around both worlds on all sides with your greatness,
   (you blasted) at the heedless ones with (the aid of) those who pay heed; you blasted forth the Dasyu with (the aid of) those who create sacred formulations, o Indra—
10. (The Dasyu) who did not reach the end of heaven, of earth, who did not hem in the wealth-giving (Indra) with their magical wiles.
    The bull Indra made his mace his yokemate. He milked the cows out of the darkness with light.
11. In accord with his autonomous power the waters flowed; he grew strong in the middle of the navigable ones.
    With a single-minded thought, with a most powerful blow Indra smashed him [=Vr̥tra?] to high heavens.
12. He pierced down through the fastnesses of Ilībiśa; he split apart horned Śuṣṇa—Indra.
    As much endurance, as much strength (as remained to you), bounteous one, (using that,) with your mace you smashed the rival who sought battle.
13. Goal-directed, he set out against his rivals; with the sharp bull he split apart the strongholds.
    He made Vr̥tra collide with his mace—Indra. He advanced his own thinking, exulting all the while.
14. You aided Kutsa, Indra, in whom you took pleasure; you furthered the bull Daśadyu as he did battle.
    Stirred up by hooves, the dust reached heaven. Śvaitreya stood up to conquer the superior men.
15. You aided the hornless bull in the Tugriyan (battles), the Śvitriyan cow at the conquering of dwelling places, bounteous one.
    They have made a long delay, just staying here. You have laid low the possessions of those who behave as rivals.

I.34 Aśvins

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9, 12

This hymn has a simple and very insistent organizing principle: the number three. The Aśvins, of whom there are, of course, two, are urged to perform various actions three times a day, using equipment, especially their chariot, that has numerous triple features. The particular ritual reason for the glorification of three must be the three soma-pressings, but this ritual application is not made clear until verse 8. If, as we have argued, the Third Pressing is a ritual innovation in the Ṛgveda, a hymn devoted to extolling it is not surprising.

The hymn falls into two unequal parts, each ending with a triṣṭubh verse (vss. 1–9, 10–12). In the first part the number three is especially celebrated, though the number is not absent in the second part (see vss. 11 and 12). The last three verses invite the Aśvins to drink the soma and to offer us rewards in return. Despite the metrical punctuation and the change in emphasis in the brief second part, there is no reason not to consider this hymn a unity.

From the grammatical point of view, the hymn contains what many scholars (including us) take as a precious archaism, the single occurrence of the phrase *sū́re duhitā́* "daughter of the Sun" (vs. 5d), preserving in *sū́re* the sandhi of final *-as* of the genitive **sū́ras* as *-e* before a dental in close phrasal sandhi. (For general discussion of this phenomenon, see Jamison 2010.) It perhaps escaped modernization because the focus of the hymn was not on the mythological marriage of Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, and she is only mentioned because of the incidental fact that the chariot she mounted had three standing places.

1. Three times today take cognizance of us. Extensive is your journey and your giving, o Aśvins.
   Because clasping you is like clasping on a garment in winter, become ones who can be clasped by men of inspired thought.
2. Three wheel-rims are on your honey-bringing chariot; all know the spoor of the soma through and through.
   Three props have been propped up to take hold of; three times by night you drive, Aśvins, and three times by day.
3. Three times on the same day, you concealers of fault, three times today equip the sacrifice with honey.
   Three times, Aśvins, make prize-giving refreshments swell for us, through the evenings and the dawns.
4. Three times drive your circuit, three times to the folk who follow your commandment; three times do your best as if threefold for the one who pursues (his ritual duties) well.
   Three times bring delight, Aśvins; three times make nourishment swell for us, like (a cow) that never runs dry.

5. Three times bring wealth to us, Aśvins, three times to the divine conclave; and three times aid our insights.
   Three times (bring) good fortune and three times acclamations for us. The daughter of the Sun mounted your chariot with its three standing places.
6. Three times, Aśvins, give us heavenly remedies, three times earthly ones, and three times those from the waters.
   Succor and luck and lifetime bring to my little son, and threefold shelter, you lords of beauty.
7. Three times, day after day, Aśvins, deserving the sacrifice, reach around the earth in its three parts.
   You Nāsatyas as charioteers travel over the three distant realms, like breath blowing over the pastures.
8. Three times, Aśvins, along with the rivers with their seven mothers the three (soma) troughs are prepared and the oblation is made threefold.
   Floating above the three earths, you guard the fixed vault of heaven, through the days, through the nights.
9. Where are the three wheels of your triply turning chariot, where the three seats which are in the same nest [=chariot box]?
   When is the yoking of the prizewinning donkey, with which, Nāsatyas, you drive up to the sacrifice.
10. Come here, Nāsatyas: the oblation is being poured. Drink of the honey with your honey-drinking mouths.
    For Savitar impels your chariot, earlier than dawn, glittering, full of ghee, for truth.
11. Drive hither, Nāsatyas, with the three times eleven gods, here to honey drinking, Aśvins.
    Extend our lifetime; sweep away our maladies; repel hatred; come into partnership (with us).
12. Aśvins, with your triply turning chariot, bring wealth in good heroes our way.
    You two who listen I keep calling to for help. Be there to strengthen us at the winning of prizes.

I.35 Savitar (except Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, Rātrī, and Savitar 1)

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1, 9

After an initial verse invoking several gods, Savitar becomes the sole focus of the hymn—Savitar primarily in his role as god of the evening, as was already suggested

by the invocation of Night in verse 1c. The first part of the Savitar portion (vss. 2–5) describes the beauty of Savitar's chariot and his journey through the night sky. During this journey he (and his horses, vss. 2 and 5; see also 7–8) survey the creatures and the larger cosmos in which they live, and in the second part of the hymn (vss. 6–9) we learn what was seen. These verses enumerate the parts of the cosmos and sketch its dimensions. This section is presented as mystical instruction (see esp. vs. 6d), which raises cosmic questions (vs. 7cd), especially about what happens to the sun during the night that Savitar is presiding over. The anxieties raised by the absence of the sun are put to rest by Savitar's ability to pervade the whole realm (vs. 9), and the hymn ends with an invitation to the god to come to us along his well-maintained route through the midspace (vss. 10–11).

1. I invoke Agni first, for well-being; I invoke Mitra and Varuṇa here, for help.
   I invoke Night, who brings to rest the moving; I invoke god Savitar, for aid.
2. Turning hither through the black realm, bringing to rest the immortal and the mortal,
   with his golden chariot Savitar the god drives here, gazing upon the creatures.
3. The god drives on a downward slope; he drives on an upward one; he drives with two resplendent fallow bays, he who is worthy of the sacrifice.
   God Savitar drives hither from afar, thrusting away all obstacles.
4. (It is) covered over with pearls, having every beauty, with golden yoke-pins, lofty—
   his chariot has bright-beamed Savitar mounted, (he) worthy of the sacrifice, having assumed his own power throughout the black realms.
5. The dusky (horses) with white feet have looked out across the peoples, while drawing his chariot with its golden forepole.
   The clans, all the creatures ever abide in the lap of divine Savitar.
6. There are three heavens: two are the laps of Savitar, one is the hero-vanquishing one in the world of Yama.
   Like a chariot (wheel) on the axle-pin, the (creatures) have taken their place on his immortal (foundations?).—Whoever will perceive this, let him declare it here.
7. The eagle has surveyed the midspaces—the lord possessing profound inspiration, who gives good guidance.
   Where now is the sun? Who perceives it? To which one of the heavens does his rein extend?
8. The eight humps of the earth he has surveyed, the three wastelands three wagon-treks (wide), the seven rivers.
   Golden-eyed god Savitar has come hither, establishing desirable treasures for the pious man.

9. Golden-palmed Savitar, whose boundaries are distant, shuttles between both, both heaven and earth.
   He thrusts away affliction; he pursues the sun; he reaches to heaven through the black realm.
10. The golden-handed lord of good guidance, of good grace, of good help—let him drive in our direction.
    Repelling demons and sorcerers, the god has taken his place facing evening, while being hymned.
11. Your age-old paths, Savitar, dustless, well-made in the midspace,
    along these easily passable paths (come) to us today. Both guard us and speak on our behalf, o god.

The next eight hymns (I.36–43) are attributed to Kaṇva Ghaura, and the Kaṇva family is named a number of times in this sequence. It is noteworthy that this collection does not contain a hymn to Indra. However, there are three hymns (I.37–39) to the Maruts, Indra's regular companions, and the following hymn, I.40, is dedicated to Brahmaṇaspati. Indra figures prominently in that hymn and is in fact identified with Brahmaṇaspati in it.

For the most part the style of these hymns is uncomplex but nicely balanced.

I.36 Agni

Kaṇva Ghaura
20 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Long but relatively straightforward, this hymn first celebrates the communal fire belonging to a number of clans, as Proferes argues (2007: 31), uniting them in common action (vss. 1–3). The poet then cites a divine precedent for joint kindling of the fire (vs. 4) and assigns Agni various social roles: priest, householder, and messenger (vs. 5), an almost trifunctional structure. Verses 7–8 conflate mortals and gods in their expansion of territory and defeat of opposing forces, and the next series of verses also mingle legendary and current mortals in their relation to Agni.

The mood of the hymn changes with verse 13. There follow a number of peremptory commands to Agni, for help and, especially, protection from and destruction of enemies, interspersed with mentions of help that Agni offered to previous mortal clients. The more militant verses are reminiscent of X.87, dedicated to Agni Rakṣohan ("Demon-Smiter"), although the latter hymn is more inventive than this one.

1. We appeal for you with well-spoken speeches to the youthfully exuberant (fire) of the many (peoples), of the clans that serve the gods,
   to Agni—just the one whom the others (also) reverently invoke.

2. The peoples have installed Agni, the increaser of might. Bringing oblations, we would do honor to you.
Become today our benevolent helper here when prizes (are at stake), o comrade.

3. We choose you as messenger, as the Hotar who affords all possessions.
Since you are great, your flames range widely; your radiant beams touch heaven.
4. The gods Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman kindle you, their primordial messenger.
With you, o Agni, that one wins every stake—the mortal who ritually serves you.

5. You are the delighting Hotar, the lord of the household, and the messenger of the clans.
In you are gathered together all the enduring commandments that the gods made.
6. Just in you who bring good fortune is every oblation poured, o youngest Agni.
Benevolent toward us today and in the future, sacrifice to the gods for masses of good heroes.

7. Bringing homage, they reverently approach him, their sovereign king, just so.
With their oblations the sons of Manu kindle Agni, after they have crossed beyond failures.
8. Smashing their Vr̥tra [/obstacle], they crossed over the two world-halves and the waters and made for themselves a wide place for peaceful dwelling.
The bull [=Agni], brilliant when bepoured, came to be at Kaṇva's side; the horse [=Agni] whinnied at the cattle-raids.

9. Sit together (with us): you are great. Blaze as the best at pursuing the gods.
Let loose your beautiful red smoke in every direction, o lauded Agni, partaker of the ritual meal—
10. Whom the gods installed here for Manu as the best sacrificer, o conveyor of the oblation,
whom Kaṇva (and?) Medhyātithi (installed) as the winner of stakes, whom Vr̥ṣan [/the bull], whom Upastuta [/the praised] (installed).

11. Agni whom Medhyātithi (and?) Kaṇva kindled from truth,
his are the refreshments that shine forth; him do these verses (make strong) and him, Agni, do we make strong.
12. Give fullness of wealth, o autonomous one, for you have friendship among the gods, o Agni.
You rule over a prize worthy of fame. Have mercy on us: you are great.

13. Stand upright to help us, like god Savitar,
   upright as the winner of the prize when we vie with (other) cantors with their ornaments in invoking (you).
14. Upright, protect us from narrow straits with your beacon. Burn up every devourer.
   Make us upright to move and to live. Find favor for us among the gods.

15. Protect us from the demon, o Agni. Protect us from the malice of the enemy.
   Protect from the man who does harm or who seeks to smash us, o youngest one with lofty beams.
16. As if with a deadly weapon, smash asunder our enemies and whoever deceives us, o you of scorching fangs.
   The mortal who sharpens himself throughout the nights, let that cheat not be master of us.

17. Agni gained good heroes en masse, and Agni good fortune for Kaṇva.
   Agni helped Medhyātithi—as did Mitra (and Varuṇa) [/the two allies]—and Agni (helped) Upastuta in winning.
18. With Agni we call Turvaśa and Yadu from afar, also Ugrādeva.
   Agni, our force against the Dasyu, led Navavāstva of the lofty chariots and Turvīti.

19. Manu installed you, Agni, to be a light for the people, each and every one.
   Born of truth, you shine when grown strong [/sprinkled] in the company of Kaṇva—(you) to whom the communities bring reverence.
20. The dazzling, hard-charging flames of Agni, terrifying like (wild beasts), are not to be confronted.
   (Burn) the demonic forces, the sorcerers forever—burn up every devourer.

I.37 Maruts

Kaṇva Ghaura
15 verses: gāyatrī, probably organized in tr̥cas

Typical Marut themes fill this hymn: their glittering beauty (lightning), their noise (thunder), and their boisterous character, which strikes fear in both animate and inanimate nature. The mystery of their birth, also a common feature of Marut hymns, is mentioned glancingly in verse 9. The language is uncomplex, but as in many Marut hymns it is energetic and visual, and it often has a conversational tone, as in the depiction of thunder in verse 13 as the Maruts talking among themselves as they travel.

1. To the playful Marut troop, unassailable beauty on a chariot,
   sing forth, o Kaṇvas—
2. Who, together with their dappled (mares) and their spears, their axes
   and unguents,
   were born having a radiance of their own.
3. As if (it were) right here, the whip in their hands is heard, when they
   wish to speak.
   On their journey they direct the glittering (lightning) downward.

4. To the spirited tempestuous troop of flaring brilliance
   sing your sacred formulation given by the gods.
5. Proclaim the prized bull among the cattle—the playful Marut troop.
   It has grown strong on the juice in the jaw (of the soma press).
6. Which of you is the highest, o superior men—you shakers of heaven
   and earth,
   since you shake them like the end (of a garment)?

7. The tribe of Manu crouches down before your journey, your formidable
   battle fury;
   the mountain, the peak bends down—
8. At whose drives, at whose journeys the earth, like a clanlord
   grown old,
   trembles in fear.
9. Because their birth was secure, (they had) the energy to come out from
   their mother,
   the power that now as before follows them.

10. And these sons (of Rudra) have erected their songs (like) race-course
    posts on their drives,
    bellowing and bending their knees for their journey.
11. Also this child of mist [=cloud]—long, wide, not negligible (in size)—
    do they stir forth with their journeys.
12. O Maruts, since you have the strength, you have stirred up the peoples
    and stirred up the mountain-peaks.

13. When the Maruts go driving, they keep talking with each other on
    the road:
    anyone can hear them.
14. Drive forth quickly with your swift ones: there are friendships for you
    among the Kaṇvas.
    There you will bring yourselves to exhilaration.
15. For (our friendship) is always there for your exhilaration; we are always
    there for them [=Maruts],
    in order (for us) to live a full lifetime.

I.38 Maruts

Kaṇva Ghaura
15 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

The conversational tone that was occasionally discernible in the previous hymn (I.37) is fully in evidence here, especially in the first tṛca (vss. 1–3), in which the poet peppers the Maruts with castigating questions about their whereabouts: the gods are clearly absent from his sacrifice and presumed to be enjoying the sacrificial offerings of rivals. The poet continues in this intimate tone in the next tṛca—first (vs. 4) slyly suggesting that if their positions were reversed, the Maruts, as poets, would praise him, the current poet, like a god, and then begging them to keep him safe (vss. 5–6) and to end the current dry spell (vs. 6c). The compressed and abrupt quality of gāyatrī meter is ideally suited for this conversational style.

The next six verses (7–12) present a more conventional description of the Maruts as the thunderstorm, with familiar images. In the last three verses (13–15), the poet exhorts himself to sing not only *to* the Maruts but *like* the Maruts, especially in verse 14. The first verse of this tṛca (13) introduces two other divinities, the Lord of the Sacred Formulation (to whom the same poet will dedicate nearby I.40) and Agni; it is not clear why they share this last tṛca with the Maruts.

1. What is this now, you fair-weather friends?! What have you taken in
 your hands,
 as a father does his son, o you for whom the ritual grass has been twisted?
2. Where now—what your goal?—have you gone on earth, as if in heaven?
 Where are they taking pleasure in you, like cows (in a pasture)?
3. Where are your newer favors, Maruts, where the easy passages?
 Where all the good portions?

4. O you whose mother is Pṛśni, if you were mortals,
 your praiser would be immortal.
5. Let your singer not be displeasing to you, like a wild animal in a pasture,
 and let him not go along the path of Yama.
6. And let not dissolution, evil rage—(going) ever further away—smite us.
 It should collapse, along with thirst.

7. This is real: the dazzling, hard-charging sons of Rudra even in the desert
 create unquenchable mist.
8. Like a bawling (cow) the lightning bellows. Like a mother her calf, it
 accompanies (the rain),
 when their rain has been sent gushing.
9. Even by day they create darkness, together with Parjanya the
 water-carrier,
 when they inundate the earth.

10. Then because of the roar of the Maruts throughout the whole earthly seat
    the sons of Manu trembled.
11. O Maruts, along the shimmering (waters) with their riverbanks, drive
    with your hard-hooved (horses)
    whose journey is never broken.
12. Let your wheel-rims be steady, and your chariots and horses,
    and your reins be well fashioned.

13. Speak here with a song at length to the Lord of the Sacred
    Formulation, to awaken him,
    and to Agni, lovely to see like an ally.
14. Bellow [/measure] the call that is in your mouth. Like Parjanya, you will
    thunder [/stretch it out].
    Sing the song-verse belonging to the hymn.
15. Extol the Marut throng—glittering, inviting admiration, receiving
    the chant—
    (so that) they will be grown fully strong here with us.

I.39 Maruts

Kaṇva Ghaura
10 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

The weighty register and solemn syntax of this hymn contrast with the light texture and somewhat colloquial register of the last two hymns (I.37–38), also dedicated to the Maruts but in a different meter, even though the rapid-fire questions of verse 1cd remind us of the abrupt questions of I.38.1–3.

Here the poet hopes to harness the overwhelming power of the Maruts in order to protect himself and his people from some looming, but not entirely defined, threat. This hope is expressed especially nakedly in the last part of the hymn, verses 7–10. In the earlier parts of the hymn the poet praises the power of the Maruts in a formal style, but by stating that this might cannot be challenged (vss. 2cd, 4), he hints that it could in fact encounter a challenge.

The usual buoyant descriptions of the Maruts' appearance and behavior as the thunderstorm are muted in this hymn. They serve only to illustrate what power might be available to the poet and his people (vss. 3, 5–6).

1. When from the far distance you cast your measure [/your bellowing], like
   a flame, just so,
   by whose will, o Maruts, in whose form, and to whom do you drive? To
   whom, o you shakers?
2. Let your weapons be steadfast for thrusting far away, and let them be
   staunch for blocking.
   Yours be the might more to be admired, not that of the tricky mortal.

3. As you smite the steadfast to the far distance and you set the heavy to rolling, o men,
   you drive across the forests of the earth and across the regions of the mountains.
4. For a rival to you has not been found in heaven nor on earth, o you who care for the stranger.
   Yours be the might, with your full lineage as yokemate; o Rudras, let it never be open to challenge.

5. They make the mountains tremble; they shake the trees asunder.
   O Maruts, you gods, you have set out, like those badly drunk (on battle frenzy), o gods, with your whole clan.
6. You have harnessed the dappled mares to your chariots; the chestnut-red pulls as your side horse.
   Even the earth has listened for your journey and the sons of Manu have become afraid.

7. We wish (to bring) your help quickly here for our lineage, o Rudras.
   Come now to us with help in just the same way as (you went) before to fearful Kaṇva.
8. Whether sent by you, Maruts, or sent by a mortal, the formless being that sets upon us—
   keep him away by your strength, by your power, away by the help that stems from you.

9. O you who receive the first of the sacrifice, you discerning ones, because you gave (to us?) Kaṇva—not a half gift!—
   with unhalved help come to us, like lightning bolts to the rain, o Maruts.
10. You bring unhalved power, unhalved strength, you of good gifts, you shakers.
    O Maruts, launch your enmity like an arrow at him who is inimical to seers, who is enveloped in fury.

I.40 Brahmaṇaspati

Kaṇva Ghaura
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Brahmaṇaspati, "Lord of the Sacred Formulation," is addressed in this hymn, but this divine figure with his transparent name is only a means to accomplish other ends. As the patron deity of ritual speech, Brahmaṇaspati will make the poet's speech effective enough to bring the other gods, especially Indra, to our sacrifice (vss. 1–2). In the second pragātha (vss. 3–4) the poet seeks Brahmaṇaspati's indirect

help. If the poet's efforts on behalf of the sacrifice are successful, his patron stands to gain (see esp. vs. 4cd), and the patron then should give liberal rewards to the singer (vs. 4a). It is striking that the patron is here called a "hero" and promised, in the famous inherited phrase, "imperishable fame"—not for his exploits on the battlefield, but for his generosity to his poet.

The test comes in the following pragātha (vss. 5–6): the new mantra under the patronage of Brahmaṇaspati is pronounced both by Brahmaṇaspati and by the human actors at the ritual. If it is a properly formulated mantra, it will bring the desired success. Judging from the final pragātha (vss. 7–8), ritual success was achieved, and this success is expressed in strikingly sexual terms: both the patron's dwelling place and his power to rule are infused with productive sexuality (vss. 7d, 8a). He also gains the gods as his allies (8a), and, most surprising of all, becomes identified as the god Indra himself (8cd), via the very last word in the hymn, *vajrín* "wielder of the mace," a qualifier otherwise only of Indra.

1. Rise up, o Lord of the Sacred Formulation. Seeking the gods, we
   beseech you:
   let the Maruts of good drops come forth; o Indra, swelling with strength,
   keep (them) company.
2. For it is just you, o son of strength [=Indra], that the mortal implores
   when the stake is set.
   O Maruts, whoever loves you, he would acquire the possession of good
   heroes and good horses.

3. Let the Lord of the Sacred Formulation go forth, let the goddess
   Liberality go forth
   to the hero belonging to men, whose gifts come in fives. Let the gods lead
   our sacrifice.
4. Who gives to the cantor liberal goods, he acquires imperishable fame;
   for him we win through sacrifice faultless refreshment bringing good
   heroes and advancing well.

5. Now the Lord of the Sacred Formulation proclaims the mantra worthy
   to be spoken,
   in which Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, and the gods have made
   their home.
6. Just that would we speak at the rites—the faultless mantra that brings
   good fortune, o gods.
   And if you gladly receive this speech, o noble men [=gods], it will attain
   all things of yours worth winning.

7. Who can attain to the man who seeks the gods, and who to the man
   whose ritual grass has been twisted?
   The pious man has advanced ever further through his abodes; he has
   made his own dwelling place pregnant.

8. He should inseminate his dominion. Together with the kings [=Ādityas],
   he smites: even in peril he has established a good dwelling for himself.
   There exists no one to obstruct, no one to overcome the one who wields
   the mace, be the stake great or small.

I.41 Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman (1–3, 7–9), Ādityas (4–6)

Kaṇva Ghaura
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

For most of its short compass, this hymn is a simple celebration of the rewards and protection the Ādityas grant to their devotee. The only notable aspect of these verses is the pervasive imagery of journeys and their potential risks.

It is only the last two verses (8–9) that introduce interesting complications. This last tr̥ca begins (vs. 7) with a deliberative question—how shall we make our praise of the gods succeed? The advice in the next two verses seems to be (translated into modern American political parlance) "Don't go negative!" In verse 8 the poet forswears responding directly to a rival behaving with hostility and affirms his intention to use only positive means to win the gods. The first two pādas of verse 9 depict the rivalry in terms of the ever-popular ancient Indian dice game (see esp. X.34), counseling the poet that you can never tell what your opponent has up his sleeve until all the cards are on the table. (We have recast this vignette into the language of modern card-playing, which works remarkably well—even to the holding of the four winning tokens, aces in our recasting, which in the Indian dice game would be a handful of *vibhītaka* nuts divisible by four.) The lesson seems to be that, given the possibility that your opponent might have some successful tricks of his own, you should engage him as little as possible and concentrate on your positive praises of the gods.

1. Whom they guard—the attentive Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman—
   that person is never deceived.
2. The mortal whom they carry across as if in their arms and protect
   from harm,
   he thrives, unharmed and whole.
3. The kings [=Ādityas] smash apart the hard places, apart the hostilities in
   front of them;
   they lead across difficult ways.

4. The path is easy to go on and harmless to men for the one going to truth.
   There is no fissure there for you.
5. The sacrifice that you lead along the straight path, o superior men,
   Ādityas,
   that will reach you for insight.

6. That mortal attains to treasure and to goods, to a whole lineage along with his life,
   as one who cannot be laid low.

7. O comrades, how shall we bring to success our praise song for Mitra and Aryaman,
   a great delight for Varuṇa?
8. Let me not respond to the man who smites or curses you, (as if) to one devoted to the gods;
   by benevolent thoughts alone will I seek to win you.
9. (A gambler) should be afraid, right up till (the cards) are laid on (the table), that (his opponent) may be holding four (aces).
   One should not go eagerly after evil speech.

I.42 Pūṣan

Kaṇva Ghaura
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas, with a final verse

Like other Pūṣan hymns, this one has an informal tone and imaginative depictions of the circumstances in which Pūṣan can render us aid. In the first part of the hymn the god is asked to rid our paths of potential enemies (esp. vss. 2–4), while in the latter part he is to lead us along these roads, now rendered safe, to prosperity (esp. vss. 7–8). The nine verses of tr̥cas are consistently addressed to Pūṣan in the 2nd person, and all those verses but 5 contain imperatives; note especially the final explosion of five abrupt, object-less imperatives in 9ab, the final verse of the hymn proper. In the final summary verse (10) Pūṣan is in the 3rd person, the object of our attentions and our requests.

1. Traverse the roads with (us), Pūṣan, and (release) constraint from (us), o child of release.
   Go forth before us to victory, o god.
2. The evil, malevolent wolf that will set his sights on us, o Pūṣan,
   smite him away, as always, from the path.
3. Drive away this highwayman, the robber who knows the crooked ways,
   to a distance far from our route.

4. The double-dealing utterer of evil, whoever he is—
   with your foot stamp on his scorching (weapon).
5. We choose that help of yours, o wondrous counselor Pūṣan,
   with which you spurred on our forefathers.
6. Now then, o you who bring every good fortune, who are the foremost wielder of the golden axe,
   make the stakes easy for us to win.

7. Lead us across the parched places. Make easy passages, easy pathways for us.
   – Pūṣan, here you will find the resolve.
8. Lead us to good pasture, with no new suffering on the road.
   – Pūṣan, here you will find the resolve.
9. Strive! Give and proffer! Sharpen up! Fill the belly!
   – Pūṣan, here you will find the resolve.

10. We do not oppose Pūṣan; we greet him with hymns.
    We beg the wondrous one for goods.

I.43 Rudra (1–2, 4–6), Rudra, Mitra and Varuṇa (3), Soma (7–9)

Kaṇva Ghaura
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 9, arranged in tṛcas

There is only one other Ṛgvedic hymn dedicated jointly to Rudra and Soma, gods who have little apparent in common. In VI.74 the two are invoked together, in a dual dvandva, but aside from generic divine descriptions only Rudra's characteristics are mentioned. Here the two gods are confined to separate tṛcas; in fact, as Oldenberg suggests, it may have originally been two hymns: verses 1–6 Rudra, 7–9 Soma.

In contrast to other Rudra contexts the depiction of Rudra here is resolutely positive; there is no trace of the dangerous or vengeful Rudra. One might in fact consider the pile-up of flattering adjectives in the opening question in verse 1 a poetic insurance policy, making it clear to the god that there will be no caviling from us. The rest of the two Rudra tṛcas focuses on the god's power to provide for the welfare of both humans and livestock, along with Aditi (vs. 2) and the principal Ādityas (vs. 3).

The first two verses (7–8) of the tṛca to Soma are straightforward and generic, with no particularly somian features. The final verse (9), in a different meter, is syntactically complex and lexically formal, and has given rise to a number of competing interpretations. In our view it depicts Soma, as often, as extending from earth to heaven, and he finds the gods in both places, in heaven, which is their abode, and on the ritual ground, because they have come to drink soma at the sacrifice. Both the relevance of this verse to the rest of the tṛca and the connection of the Rudra and Soma portions of the hymn escape us.

1. What might we say to Rudra, the provident, the most generous, the very powerful;
   what might we say that is most wealful to his heart?
2. So that for our livestock and men Aditi will create Rudrian power, likewise for our kine,
   likewise for our offspring.
3. So that Mitra and Varuṇa will be attentive to us, likewise Rudra,
   likewise all (the gods) in concert.

4. To the lord of songs, the lord of ritual offerings, to Rudra whose remedies are healing [?]
   we plead for the favor of luck and lifetime.
5. He who shines like the blazing sun, like gold,
   as the best of the gods, as the good one
6. Will make weal for our steed and easy passage for our ram and ewe,
   for our men and women, for our cow.

7. Upon us, Soma, set down the glory of a hundred men,
   great, powerfully manly fame.
8. Let neither obstructions nor hostilities deflect us, Soma.
   O drop, give us a share in the prize.
9. The creatures [=gods] that belong to you, the immortal one—as their head you seek them in the highest domain of truth [=heaven]
   and in the navel (of the earth?) [=ritual ground], Soma. You will know them as the ones who attend upon (you), Soma.

The next group of hymns (I.44–50), attributed to Praskaṇva Kāṇva, the poet also of VIII.49 (the first Vālakhilya hymn) and IX.95, has the defining feature that all the hymns are related to a particular ritual litany, the Prātaranuvāka or "Early-Morning Recitation" (on which see Eggeling *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 2: 229 n. 2; Hillebrandt 1897: 128; Keith 1925 I: 328). The gods to whom these Praskaṇva hymns are dedicated are those mentioned in the litany: Agni, particularly in his capacity as illuminator of the early morning and conveyor of the dawn divinities, the Aśvins, Dawn, and the rising Sun.

I.44 Agni, Aśvins, Dawn (1–2), Agni (3–14)

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
14 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

As indicated in the introduction to the Praskaṇva collection, this hymn to Agni praises him in his connection to the rituals of the early morning, especially in his role as conveyor of the other gods who attend this sacrifice. In its fourteen verses this hymn seldom departs from this simple message. The language is measured and dignified, but not difficult or poetically contorted.

1. Agni, immortal one—the bright benefit radiating from Dawn:
   convey it here to the pious man, o Jātavedas; convey here today the gods who wake at dawn.
2. For you are the delightful messenger, conveyor of oblations, o Agni, charioteer of the ceremonies.
   Jointly with the Aśvins and with Dawn establish in us good heroism and lofty fame.

3. Today we choose as messenger Agni the good one, dear to many,
   whose beacon is smoke, but who is foamy with radiance when the dawns break, the glory of the ceremonies, of the sacrifices.
4. The fairest, the youngest guest, well-libated, delightful to the pious folk—
   I reverently invoke Agni Jātavedas when the dawns break, to journey to the gods.

5. I will praise you—o immortal nurturer of all—
   as immortal guardian—o Agni, partaker of the ritual meal—as best sacrificer—o conveyor of the oblation.
6. Be one who is good for the singer to laud, o youngest one, one whose tongue is honey when well-libated.
   Lengthening the lifetime of Praskaṇva to live, do homage to the divine folk.

7. Because the clans together kindle you as Hotar who provides all possessions [/possesses all knowledge],
   o much-invoked Agni, bring the discerning gods here at a run—
8. Savitar, Dawn, the Aśvins, Bhaga. Through the nights, when the dawns break,
   the Kaṇvas, their soma pressed, kindle you, Agni, as conveyor of the oblation, o you of good ceremony.

9. For you are the master of the ceremonies, Agni, the messenger of the clans.
   Convey here today the gods who wake at dawn, who look like the sun, for soma-drinking.
10. O Agni rich in radiance, through the earlier dawns you have shone visible to all.
    You are the helper set in front among the settlements; you are the descendant of Manu (set in front) at the sacrifices.

11. O Agni, as the furtherer of the sacrifice, as the Hotar seasonably sacrificing
    would we install you, just as Manu did, o god—and as the discerning, quick, immortal messenger.
12. When as the one set in front for the gods, their intimate, you undertake their mission, o you of Mitra's might,
    the beams of your fire flash like the clamorous waves of a river.

13. Listen, you with listening ears, along with your passengers, the gods who travel with you, o Agni.
    Let them sit on the ritual grass—Mitra, Aryaman, and those who travel early to the ceremony.

14. Let them listen to the praise—the Maruts of good drops, whose tongue is Agni, strong through truth.
 Let him drink the soma—Varuṇa of steadfast commandment, jointly with the Aśvins and with Dawn.

I.45 Agni (except Gods 10cd)

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
10 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one celebrates Agni as the conveyor of the gods appropriate to the early-morning sacrifice. Unlike the last hymn, however, these gods are not individually enumerated; instead generic names for groups of gods are given in the first half of the first verse, and in the last two verses (9–10) they are summed up in the phrase "the divine folk." The emphasis is rather on the world of men. In verse 3 the poet mentions a number of prior singers as models for his own interaction with Agni, and he groups himself with his kinsmen the Priyamedhas (vs. 4) and Kaṇvas (vs. 5), as well as unnamed poets and invokers in verses 6–8. Thus, while the two pairs of outer verses (1–2, 9–10) concern Agni's delivery of the gods to the sacrifice, the middle verses (3–8) are occupied with the sacrificers' desire for Agni to listen to their hymns and pleas.

1. You, Agni, (bring) the Vasus, the Rudras, and the Ādityas here.
 I will sacrifice to the being who assures good rites, born of Manu, sprinkling ghee [=Agni].
2. Because, o Agni, the discriminating gods give attentive hearing to the pious man,
 bring them here, the three and thirty, you with the ruddy horses, you who long for song.
3. As in the case of Priyamedha, of Atri, of Virūpa, o Jātavedas,
 as of Aṅgiras, o you of great commandment, hear the call of Praskaṇva.
4. The greatly observant Priyamedhas have called for help
 on Agni, ruling over the rites with his blazing flame.
5. O comrade whose oblation is ghee, listen well to these songs here,
 with which the sons of Kaṇva call upon you for aid.
6. O you of brightest fame, the kinsmen within their clans call upon you,
 o much beloved Agni, the flame-haired, to convey the oblation.
7. The inspired poets have installed you as their Hotar, seasonably sacrificing, best finder of goods,
 with listening ears, of greatest extent, o Agni, at the rituals of daybreak.
8. The inspired poets whose soma is pressed have roused you to delight—
 they bearing the lofty light, the oblation for the pious mortal, o Agni.

9. O might-made comrade, those who travel early for soma-drinking,
 the divine folk—here today make them sit on the ritual grass, o
 good one.
10. The divine folk, o Agni, attract toward us through sacrifice, with
 invocations common (to all):
 "Here is the soma, you of good drops. Drink it, aged overnight."

I.46 Aśvins

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
15 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is an invitation to the Aśvins to come in the early morning to a soma offering, either the early morning of the pressing day or the early morning of the following day in an Atirātra or "overnight" soma ritual. It is a difficult hymn because of its obscure references (cf. vss. 4 and 5) and its penchant for hapaxes (e.g., *kúṭa* in vs. 4, *ā́dāra* in 5, *avidriyá* in 15).

A unifying image running through much of the hymn is the journey of the Aśvins over the waters to the sacrificial area (vss. 3, 7, 8, 11), introduced by the poet's statement that the Sindhu River is the mother of the Aśvins (vs. 2). In accord with this image, the soma itself is a river, flowing upward to the Aśvins to bring them to the sacrificial area (vs. 9ab). In this verse "what is good" or "the good thing" that is "in the track of the rivers" may refer to the soma, as Geldner suggests. Echoing this image is the poet's repeated use of derivatives of √*pṛ̥* "carry across" (vss. 4, 6, 12).

In verse 1 Dawn is the first to arrive, before other deities, although with the arrival of dawn the Aśvins should also appear, and indeed in verse 14 the poet returns to the arrival of Dawn and says that she has followed the Aśvins. In verse 2 the insight through which the Aśvins find goods may be both their insight and also the poet's, for the hymns inspire the Aśvins to bring goods. Verse 4 is very obscure for several reasons. First, the identity of the "lover of the waters, the carrier" is uncertain. Among the suggestions are Indra (Pirart 1995: 81) or Soma (Geldner, Renou, Thieme [1967: 236]), but it might also be Agni, who is also connected with the waters—he is famously "the Child of the Waters"—and who carries oblations to the gods and carries sacrificers across difficulties. Unfortunately 4c is not much help in identifying "the carrier" since *kúṭa* is a hapax of uncertain meaning. We have translated it as "house" following Thieme, but it may have another meaning and could even be a proper name, as Pirart suggests. This "lover of the waters" is probably also the *ā́dāra*, again a hapax and again of unsure meaning. We have translated it as "the one paying heed," but according to another etymological analysis it could mean "breaker, splitter." All we can say with certainty is that the verse ends with a clear invitation to the Aśvins to drink the soma (5c). As the

soma flows to the Aśvins, so the poet hopes that the morning light, corresponding to the soma, will flow toward the sacrificers (6). In verse 9 the poet turns to address his fellow Kaṇvas in the first half-verse and the Aśvins in pāda c. In that last line, the poet asks where the Aśvins are hidden, where they are "cloaked," for it is presumably still dark and neither the dawn nor the Aśvins have yet appeared. The cloaking of the Aśvins in 9 contrasts with verse 13, in which the poet asks the Aśvins to "clothe" themselves in the soma in the company of Vivasvant, who is here likely associated with the sun. Then they and the morning will be present to the sacrificers.

1. With none before her, this Dawn breaks, the beloved of heaven.
   I shall sing aloft praise to you, Aśvins,
2. Who are wondrous, whose mother is the River Sindhu, who are mindful of riches—
   the gods finding goods through insight.
3. Your lead (animals) twist and turn upon the (sea's) broken surface,
   when your chariot will fly with its birds.
4. By the oblation the lover of the waters, the carrier, carries across, o men—
   he, the father and boundary of the house [?],
5. The one paying heed [?] to (our) conceptions for the sake of you two, o Nāsatyas, you for whom (these) words are conceived:
   "Drink boldly of the soma."
6. The light-bringing refreshment that will carry us across the darkness, Aśvins—
   give that to us.
7. Travel here by the boat of our conceptions to go to the far shore!
   Hitch up your chariot, Aśvins!
8. Your oar is broader than heaven; your chariot is at the ford of the rivers;
   through our insight the soma drops have been hitched up.
9. O Kaṇvas, (in the track) of heaven are the soma drops; in the track of the rivers is what is good.
   Where do you two desire to place that cloak of yours?
10. Radiance has come into being for the soma plant: the sun, counterpart to gold!
    The black one [=the fire in the coals] has peered out with his tongue.
11. And the path of truth has come into being to lead right to the far shore.
    The course of heaven has appeared.
12. The singer awaits each and every help of the Aśvins
    at the exhilarating drink of soma for the two who carry across.
13. Having clothed yourselves with the drink of soma and with song in the company of Vivasvant,
    come here, o you who are good luck, as at the time of Manu!

14. Dawn has followed your glory as you circle the earth.
    You will win the truths in the nights.
15. Aśvins, both of you—drink! Both of you—offer protection to us
    through your unbreakable help!

I.47 Aśvins

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
10 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

The hymn is dominated by imperatives, which appear in every verse except the last. These imperatives command the Aśvins to attend to the poet (e.g., 2d), to come to the sacrifice (e.g., 2b, 3d, 7c, 8b, 8d, 9a), to drink the soma (e.g., 1c, 3b), and especially to bestow prosperity on the sacrificer (e.g., 1d, 5c, 6b, 6d). The last verse summarizes the desire of the poet to bring the Aśvins, together with many goods, by means of the "recitations and chants" of those performing the sacrifice.

Like I.34 the hymn also associates a number of triplets with the Aśvins: their "triply turning chariot with its three standing places" (vs. 2) and the ritual grass "on which are three seats" (vs. 4). These triplets likely have ritual reference, although it is not clear what the reference might be. The "three turns" of the Aśvins' chariot may describe the three pressings of a soma sacrifice. Compare X.52.4d = 124.1b, which speaks of the sacrifice with its *páñcayāmaṃ trivŕ̥taṃ saptátantum* "five courses, three turns, seven threads." The term *trivandhurá* "with three standing places" is only used to describe the chariot of the Aśvins, but never with much indication about its referent. Geldner suggests that "the three seats" of *triṣadhasthá* might be for the two Aśvins and Sūryā or that they are simply three because the Aśvins are regularly associated with triplets. But there are other possibilities. Although *triṣadhasthá* characterizes various gods, in X.61.14 and V.11.2 it describes the three seats of Agni, the three fires, and perhaps it refers to these in this context as well. In that case, the three seats are not actually on the ritual grass but rather at or near it.

In the first verse the reference to the "day-old" soma places this hymn in the morning of the day following the pressing day in an Atirātra or "overnight" soma ritual. The soma offerings in the morning are a continuation of the offerings of the Third Pressing. If recited at the end of the rite, it is no wonder that the poet emphasizes the goods that he hopes that the Aśvins will bring on their chariot (3c, 6a, 9bc)—the chariot that is both the vehicle on which the Aśvins ride and the sacrifice itself. These are the goods that should come to the sacrificers as a result of their completed sacrifice.

In verse 7 the poet calls on the Aśvins to come whether they are far away or with Turvaśa. The Kaṇva poets of the VIIIth maṇḍala suggest their alliance with the

Turvaśa and Yadu tribes (e.g., VIII.4.1 and 4.7; 7.18; 9.14; 10.5; 45.27). Since our poet is a Kaṇva as well, Turvaśa represents an ally, perhaps the people of the sacrificer for whom the hymn was composed. The point is therefore that the Aśvins should come to this sacrifice whether are far away or close by, among this very people.

1. O you growing strong through truth, this most honey-filled soma has been pressed for you two.
   Drink that (soma) aged overnight, Aśvins. Grant riches to the pious man.
2. Journey here, Aśvins, by your triply turning chariot with its three standing places, with its beautiful adornment.
   The Kaṇvas are creating a formulation for you at the rite. Listen well to their call!

3. O Aśvins, growing strong through truth, drink the most honey-filled soma.
   Then today, wondrous ones, come to the pious man, bringing goods on your chariot.
4. O you providing all possessions, mix the sacrifice with honey on the ritual grass, on which are three seats.
   The heaven-bound Kaṇvas, having pressed soma for you, call upon you two, Aśvins.

5. With what superior powers you helped Kaṇva, Aśvins,
   with these help us, o lords of beauty! Drink the soma, o you growing strong through truth!
6. Wondrous Aśvins, convey nourishments to the very generous one, bringing goods on your chariot.
   Whether from the sea or from heaven, grant much-desired wealth to us.

7. Nāsatyas, if you are in the far distance, or if you are with the Turvaśa,
   from there come to us by your smoothly rolling chariot, together with the rays of the sun.
8. Turning this way, let your team, the glory of the rite, convey you to our soma-pressings.
   Replenishing refreshment for the good (ritual) performer, and possessing good drops, sit here on the ritual grass, o men.

9. Nāsatyas, come by your sun-skinned chariot,
   by which you have ever conveyed goods to the pious man, in order to drink of the honeyed soma.
10. With our recitations and chants we call the two bringing many goods down this way for their help,
    for surely you have always drunk soma at the dear seat of the Kaṇvas, Aśvins.

I.48 Dawn

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
16 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Another in Praskaṇva Kāṇva's series devoted to the deities of the early-morning sacrifice, this hymn to Dawn is especially concerned with the acquisition of goods—a common association because the dakṣiṇā or "priestly gift" is distributed to the poets and priests at the Morning Pressing. The radiant beauty of Dawn and her mandate to rouse and animate all living beings are not neglected in the hymn, however, especially in the middle verses (5–10). In verses 11–12 she is also, unusually, charged with a task more appropriate for Agni (see, e.g., I.44), namely conveying the gods to the sacrifice.

1. Along with a thing of value, dawn forth to us, Daughter of Heaven,
   along with lofty brilliance, radiant goddess, along with wealth, (you who are) rich in gifts.
2. Possessing horses and cows, finding all goods in abundance, (the dawns) bestir themselves to shine.
   Arouse liberalities toward me, o Dawn; stimulate the generosity of the benefactors.

3. Dawn has dawned (before) and will dawn now—the lively goddess of the chariots.
   Those who hold themselves (ready [for giving]) at her approaches, as those who seek fame on the sea hold themselves (firm),
4. And, o Dawn, those who at your journeys yoke their mind for giving—the patrons—
   here (the poet) Kaṇva, the latest of Kaṇvas, sings their names, the names of those superior men.

5. Liberal-spirited Dawn drives here, giving delight like a maiden.
   Wakening the footed community, she speeds along. She makes the winged ones fly up.
6. She who disperses the assembly, disperses the busy ones, she follows (them) like a track—she moist (with dew) [/lubricious].
   The birds, having flown at your dawning, do not settle, o you who are rich in prize mares.

7. This one has hitched herself up from out of the distance, from (the place of) the rising of the sun.
   With a hundred chariots, this well-portioned Dawn drives out toward men.
8. Every moving creature bows before her gaze. The spirited one creates light.

Dawn, the bounteous Daughter of Heaven, dawns away hatred, away failures.

9. O Dawn, be radiant here with your glittering radiance, o Daughter of Heaven,
conveying hither abundant good fortune for us, dawning forth at the rituals of daybreak.
10. For the breathing and living of all is in you, when you dawn forth, spirited one.
With your lofty chariot, radiant one, heed our call, you of bright bounty.

11. Dawn, do win the prize, which is bright for the human race.
With it convey those of good action [=gods] here to the ceremonies, to those of good action [=sacrificers] who (as oblation-)conveyors sing to you.
12. Convey all the gods here for soma-drinking from the midspace, o Dawn.
Establish in us a mass of cows and of horses, worthy of praise, o Dawn, also victory's prize and good heroes en masse.

13. She whose gleaming, auspicious rays have appeared opposite,
let her—Dawn—give us all-desirable wealth, well ornamented, easy to come by.
14. Because even those previous seers who called upon you for aid, for help, o great one—
do you (now) greet our praises (as you did theirs) with generosity, o Dawn, with your bright brilliance.

15. Dawn, when today with your radiance you will push apart the two doors of heaven,
then hold out to us broad shelter that keeps the wolf away, o goddess, hold out refreshments consisting of cows.
16. Mingle us with lofty wealth provided with all ornaments, with refreshments,
with brilliance surpassing all, great Dawn, with prizes, o you who are rich in prize mares.

I.49 Dawn

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
4 verses: anuṣṭubh

A short and simple hymn, treating Dawn's journey from heaven to the earthly realm (vss. 1–2), to rouse the living world (vs. 3). The poets' response to her

coming and their hope that her advent will bring them gifts end the hymn (vs. 4cd).

1. Dawn, with your auspicious (rays) come here, even from the luminous realm of heaven.
   Let the (horses) whose breath is reddish convey you right to the house of the one who has soma.
2. The well-ornamented, well-naved chariot that you have mounted, Dawn—
   with it further the people of good fame today, Daughter of Heaven.
3. Even the winged birds and the two-footed and four-footed, o silvery
   Dawn, have set forth following your regulations of time, from the ends of heaven—
4. For, dawning forth with your rays, you illuminate the whole luminous realm.
   Just you, Dawn, have the Kaṇvas, longing for goods, called upon with songs.

I.50 Sūrya (1-9), and a Spell against Disease (10–13)

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
13 verses: gāyatrī 1–9, anuṣṭubh 10–13

This final hymn of the Praskaṇva sequence falls into two parts. The last three verses (11–13) have a clear Atharvan cast, as a spell against disease, specifically jaundice. By sympathetic magic, the golden sun removes the jaundice from the afflicted man and displaces it onto other, presumably yellowish creatures—parrots and other birds.

The first nine verses, in a different meter, are a charmingly simple description of the rising of the Sun and the beginning of his journey across the sky. The affinity of the intermediate verse (10) is not clear. Though it matches the meter of the final three verses, in tone it seems more like a final verse summarizing the happy result of the sunrise in verses 1–9. (It is not unusual for the final verse of a hymn to be in a different meter from the rest.) If this is the case, then the spell in verses 11–13 could have been tacked onto this hymn because of the phrase "higher heaven" (11b), which echoes "higher light" and "highest light" in verse 10.

1. Up do the beacons convey this god Jātavedas,
   the Sun, for all to see.
2. Away like thieves go these heavenly bodies with the night,
   before the Sun, who has his gaze on all.

3. His beacons have appeared; his rays (extend) widely throughout the
   peoples,
   flashing like fires.
4. Transiting, visible to all, a light-maker are you, o Sun.
   You illuminate the whole luminous realm.
5. Facing the clans of the gods, facing the descendants of Manu do
   you go up,
   facing all, (for them) to see the sun—
6. With which as your eye, o purifying Varuṇa, you look upon
   the one bustling throughout the peoples.
7. Across heaven you go, the broad realm, measuring the days with the nights,
   looking upon the races, o Sun.
8. Seven fallow bay mares convey you, the flame-haired, in your chariot—
   o wide-gazing god Sun.
9. He has yoked the seven sleek daughters of the Sun's chariot.
   With these of his own yoking he drives.
10. Looking up from the darkness to the higher light, we
    have come up to the Sun, god among the gods, the highest light.

11. As you go up today, o you of Mitra's might, and mount the higher
    heaven,
    banish my heart-affliction and jaundice, o Sun.
12. In the parrots, in the *ropanā*-birds we place my jaundice.
    And in the *hāridrava*-birds we deposit my jaundice.
13. Up has gone this Āditya here, along with all his strength,
    making the hater subject to me. May I not become subject to the hater.

Here begins the second large division of Maṇḍala I (51–191).

The next seven hymns (I.51–57) are ascribed to Savya Āṅgirasa and consist only of Indra hymns. For the most part the hymns are a glorification of Indra's deeds—both the standard and well-known triumphs like the smashing of Vr̥tra (see esp. I.52) and numerous lesser-known feats, which are presented in catalogue fashion (see esp. I.51, 53). The style is often syntactically and rhetorically contorted, with rare words and obscure expressions.

I.51 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14–15

This hymn consists primarily of an elaborated list of Indra's great deeds, some well known (like the Vala myth in 3a, the Vr̥tra myth in 4, Indra's involvement

with Uśanā Kāvya and Kutsa in the slaying of Śuṣṇa in verses 6a, 10–11) and others quite obscure. For example, Vimada, mentioned in 3ab, is usually a client of the Aśvins, who supply him with a wife (often using the same verb [√*vah* "convey"] as here: I.112.9, 116.1, 117.20; X.39.7, 65.12). Is the same deed attributed to Indra here and is the "good thing" that Indra brings him a reference to the wife? Similarly puzzling are the enemies who make oblation "on the shoulder" in verse 5 (perhaps indicating people following different ritual practices and not part of the Ārya community; see vss. 8–9), Indra's role as an ant destroying walls in verse 9, and his transformation into the female consort of an otherwise unknown figure in verse 13c.

The catalogue of deeds is interrupted by demands that Indra use his same martial powers for our benefit (vss. 7–9ab), and it is framed by an exhortation to the poets to give praise to the god (vs. 1) and the announcement of the end of the praise hymn and the boons we seek from it (vss. 14–15).

1. With your hymns exhilarate this ram, much-summoned Indra worthy of verses, the flood of good,
   for whom the human (generations) pass by like the days. Chant to the most liberal inspired one for our benefit.
2. His forms of help [=helpers] attained to the very superior one, who fills the midspace but is enclosed by his powers—
   the skillful R̥bhus (attained to) Indra, who was aroused to exhilaration. Liberality, impelling (him), mounted to him of a hundred resolves.
3. You opened up the cowpen for the Aṅgirases, and you were the way-finder for Atri in the (house) of a hundred doors.
   You also conveyed the good thing [=wife?] to Vimada along with grain (for the oblation?), when in the contest you set to dancing the stone of the one clad in it.
4. You opened up the covers of the waters; you held fast to the drop-laden goods in the mountain.
   When, o Indra, with your vast power you smashed the serpent Vr̥tra, just after that you made the sun rise in heaven to be seen.
5. With your wiles you blew away the wily ones, who, according to their own customs, poured (their offering) "on the shoulder."
   You broke through the strongholds of Pipru, o you of manly mind; you helped R̥jiśvan through in the smashing of Dasyus.
6. You helped Kutsa in the smashing of Śuṣṇa, and you made Śambara subject to Atithigva.
   With your foot you trampled down Arbuda, though he was great. Indeed, from long ago you were born to smash Dasyus.
7. In you every power has been placed toward the same end. Your generosity excites itself to drink the soma.

Your mace has become visible, placed in your arms: hew down the bullish strengths of your rival.

8. Distinguish between the Āryas and those who are Dasyus. Chastising those who follow no commandment, make them subject to the man who provides ritual grass.
   Become the potent inciter of the sacrificer. I take pleasure in all these (deeds) of yours at our joint revelries.
9. Indra—making those who reject his commandments subject to those who follow his commandments, piercing those who don't stand by him with (the aid of) those who do—
   being praised, as an ant he smashed apart the mud walls of the one trying to reach heaven, who, though already full grown, kept growing.
10. When Uśanā fashions might with might for you, then your vast power thrusts apart the two worlds with its greatness.
    The mind-yoked (horses) of the Wind conveyed you, being filled (with soma?), here to fame, o manly minded one.
11. When he has found exhilaration together with Uśanā Kāvya, Indra mounts the two (horses) that are surging and surging further.
    The strong one let loose the waters in a stream for coursing and propelled apart the fortified strongholds of Śuṣṇa.
12. You mount the chariot to the bullish drinks on which you become exhilarated at Śāryata's (ritual) presentation,
    so that you will take pleasure in (the ceremonies) with their pressed soma, o Indra. (Then) you ascend to the unassailing signal call in heaven.
13. You gave little Vr̥cayā to great, eloquent Kakṣīvant, the soma-presser, o Indra.
    You became the wife of Vr̥ṣaṇaśva, o you of good resolve. All these (deeds) of yours are to be proclaimed at the pressings.
14. Indra has become fixed in the exclusive possession of the man of good insight; the praise song (has been fixed) like a doorpost among the Pajras,
    as it seeks horses, cows, chariots, and goods. Indra alone is master of wealth and will provide it.
15. This homage has been pronounced for the bull, the independent king, the mighty one of real unbridled force.
    In this community might we, together with our patrons, be possessors of hale heroes under your protection, o Indra.

I.52 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13, 15

This hymn begins in the same way as the previous one, by praising Indra in the form of a ram, but, unlike I.51 with its listing of Indra's great deeds, I.52 focuses almost entirely on the Vr̥tra myth and its aftermath—save for a brief reference to the Vala myth in verse 5 (and possibly verse 3). The account of the Vr̥tra battle begins in verse 2 and continues through verse 10, with a reiteration in the final verse 15, and thus constitutes one of the longer sustained R̥gvedic passages devoted to this myth. This account of the myth has not achieved the fame of a hymn like I.32, however—in part because of the obscurity of its diction and syntax.

This version also allots a large role to the helpers that encouraged and aided Indra at the battle, not only Tvaṣṭar (vs. 7) as often, but also the Maruts, identified as such in verses 9 and 15 (see also vs. 3), but also referred to as personified abstractions—"forms of help" (see vss. 2, 4–5, 9), "powers," et cetera. Almost paradoxically the hymn also depicts the fear of the divine beings and of heaven itself during the Vr̥tra battle (vss. 9–10). Moreover, the final verses (11–14, excluding the summarizing verse 15) concern the extent of Indra's unrivaled power, comparing its reach to the furthest expanses of heaven, earth, and the midspace.

1. I shall exalt this ram, who finds the sun, whose hundred (superior powers) of good essence arise together.
   (Might I turn) his chariot, rushing to the summons, like a steed (rushing to) the prize; with my well-twisted (hymns) might I turn Indra here for help.
2. Like a mountain, immovable on its foundations, Indra, with his thousand forms of help, grew strong amid his powers,
   when subduing the floods, highly excited by the soma stalk, he smashed Vr̥tra, who obstructed the rivers.
3. For he (was) a skulker among skulkers at the maw (of Vr̥tra?), but he, having a golden foundation, was strengthened to exhilaration at the (soma-)udder by the inspired thinkers [=Maruts?]—
   Indra—with my skillful work and insight I have summoned him whose gifts are most generous, for he is a provider because of the soma stalk.
4. Him whom they fill like the sea—his own superior powers of good essence which have the ritual grass as their seat in heaven—
   Indra—his forms of help [=helpers] stood by him at the Vr̥tra-smashing, as did his unextinguishable gusts whose breath is unobstructed.
5. In his exhilaration, while he was fighting, his forms of help rushed to him, who has his own proper work, like rapids in a torrent,
   when the mace-wielding Indra, emboldened by the soma stalk, split the barricades of the Vala cave, as Trita had.

6. Glowing heat encircles him [=Indra], and his vast power flared. He [=Vr̥tra], having obstructed the waters, was lying on the foundation of the dusky realm,
   when you, Indra, struck your thunder down upon the jaws of Vr̥tra, Hard-to-Grasp, in the (waters') torrent.
7. For like waves to a lake, the sacred formulations that make you strong rush down to you, o Indra.
   Tvaṣṭar also strengthened his own power, to be employed by you: he fashioned the mace of overwhelming might.
8. And when you, o Indra of concentrated resolve, together with your fallow bays, smashed Vr̥tra, making a way for the waters for Manu,
   you held the metal mace in your arms. You fixed the sun fast in heaven to be seen.
9. What is lofty, self-luminous, formidable, and praiseworthy [=Indra in form of sun]—in fear they made that their own means of ascent to heaven,
   when the forms of help appropriate to human prize-contests, (that is,) the Maruts, accompanying that superior man [=Indra], cheered on Indra, their sun.
10. Even formidable heaven kept retreating from the sound of this serpent and in fear at your mace, Indra,
    when, in the exhilaration of the pressed soma, with your vast power you split the head of Vr̥tra, who was pressing harder and harder upon the two world-halves.
11. Now, o Indra, just as far as the earth with its ten coils (extends) and the separate peoples will extend throughout all the days,
    just to there, o bounteous one, your widely famed strength will pervade heaven with vast power and mightiness.
12. O you of bold mind, at the far edge of this dusky realm and of distant heaven with the might natural to you
    you have made the earth the counterpart of your might for our help. Encompassing the waters and the sun, you go all the way to heaven.
13. You have become the counterpart of earth and you became the lord of high (heaven) containing lofty heroes.
    You filled the whole midspace with your greatness. This is certainly true: there is no other like you.
14. Whose expanse neither heaven nor earth reaches across—any more than the rivers reach the end of the dusky realm—
    nor (do they reach him) who performs his own proper work in his exhilaration while he is fighting. You alone have done everything else in due order.
15. There at this same contest the Maruts chanted and all the gods cheered you on,
    when with your deadly weapon covered with spikes, o Indra, you struck down against the mouth of Vr̥tra.

I.53 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10–11

This hymn is divided into two roughly equal halves. After an initial verse exhorting the singers to present their work to Indra at the sacrifice, lest a lazy performance or bad composition deprive them of his gifts, Indra is praised in verses 2–5 for his quick response in fulfilling the desires of his singers. The mood changes in the next five verses (6–10), which constitute a brisk catalogue of Indra's martial deeds in aid of his named human clients. This survey is somewhat reminiscent of the list of Indra's deeds in the first Savya hymn, I.51. The hymn ends with a summary verse (11), which returns to the hortatory style of verse 1.

1. Let us bring forward our speech for the great one, our songs for Indra, at the seat of Vivasvant,
   for never has anyone found a treasure among those who are, as it were, asleep. A poor praise hymn is not acclaimed among the givers of wealth.
2. O Indra, you are the one who breaks out the horse, breaks out the cow, breaks out the grain, since you are the forceful lord of (every) good thing.
   He who from of old does his best for men, who does not short their desires, a comrade to his comrades—to him we now sing.
3. O able Indra, most brilliant doer of many (deeds)—just yours is the good that keeps appearing all around.
   Therefore, o overpowering one, having grasped it entirely, bring it here. Don't leave lacking the desire of the singer who seeks you.
4. He is well disposed through these days by reason of these soma drops, checking neglect by means of cows and (wealth) in horses.
   Might we, breaking up the Dasyu with Indra and the soma drops, keeping hostility away, be embraced by refreshment.
5. O Indra, might we be embraced by wealth, by nourishment, and by much-glittering prizes bound for heaven.
   Might we be embraced by your divine solicitude, having the unbridled force of heroes, with cows at the front, accompanied by horses.
6. These exhilarating drinks exhilarated you and your bullish powers—these soma juices at the smashing of obstacles, o lord of settlements,
   when you laid low ten unopposable obstacles for the bard, a thousand for the man who spreads the ritual grass.
7. Battle after battle you join boldly; fortress after fortress do you now smash together with your power,
   since, with Namī as your comrade, o Indra, in the far distance you laid low the wily one, Namuci by name.
8. You struck Karañja and Parṇaya with the sharpest wheel-edge of Atithigva.

You, unyielding, split the hundred fortresses of Vaṅgr̥da that were besieged by R̥jiśvan.

9. You, together with Suśravas with no (other) adherents, (wrenched down) those twice ten kings of the peoples, who had come too close; you, the famous, wrenched down the sixty thousand ninety-nine with a chariot wheel and a lame (horse).
10. You helped Suśravas with your means of help and Tūrvayāṇa with your means of rescue, o Indra. You made Kutsa, Atithigva, and Āyu subject to him, to the great young king.
11. We who, when the chant is raised, will be your most friendly comrades, Indra, having the gods as our herdsmen— let us praise you—we having good heroes because of you and receiving a longer, more extensive lifetime.

I.54 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 6, 8, 9, 11

Etymological figures and lexical repetitions abound in this hymn, and through this repetition Indra comes to "own" certain words—particularly "daring" and "sovereignty." Much of the hymn (esp. vss. 1–6) consists of praise of Indra's various violent deeds, interspersed with exhortations to sing these praises to the god. In verse 7 the earthly king is invested with some of Indra's prestige—as long as he emulates Indra's habit of command and also shows the Indraic quality of generosity to the poets. This generosity is also urged on Indra himself in verses 8–9 and 11, with a curious and obscurely phrased treatment of the Vr̥tra myth interspersed in verse 10.

1. Do not (leave) us in this distress in our battles, o bounteous one, for the end of your vast power cannot be reached. You made the rivers roar, yourself constantly bellowing through the woods. How have the war cries [/Heaven and Earth] not clashed together in fear?
2. Chant to the able one, the capable one with his abilities. Exalting him, praise Indra as he listens— he who, a bullish bull by his bullish nature, with his daring power bears down on the two world-halves.
3. Chant a thunderous speech to lofty heaven. Of which daring one his daring mind has its own sovereignty— the lord possessing lofty fame through his lofty might, the bull [=Indra] has been put in front for his two fallow bays, for he is the chariot.

4. You shook the back of the lofty heaven; by yourself, in your daring, you cut down Śambara,
   as, daringly, by reason of the exhilarating (soma), you battle the sharpened stone, the fist, of the wily one grown weak,
5. As you yank down on the head of the snorting Śuṣṇa also grown weak, yourself constantly bellowing through the woods,
   with your mind facing forward and possessed of lofty might. If you will also do (such) today, who (will evade) you?
6. You helped the manly Turvaśa and Yadu; you (helped) Turvīti and Vayya, o you of a hundred resolves;
   you (helped) Etaśa and his chariot when the stake was to be decided, and you subjugated the ninety-nine fortifications.
7. As king and lord of the settlements, that man will grow in strength who, having bestowed his oblation, advances (Indra's) command in turn,
   or who greets the (poets') hymns with generosity. For him the gift [/drop] of heaven swells here below.
8. Unequalled is his sovereignty, unequalled his inspired thinking. Let the soma-drinkers of our group be preeminent through their labor—
   they who strengthen the great sovereignty, steadfast and bull-strong, of you who give, o Indra.
9. For you alone are these ample beakers, milked by stones and resting in cups—the draughts of Indra.
   Attain (them), satisfy your desire for them, and then put your mind to giving goods.
10. There stood darkness, whose tangles were the foundation for the waters, a mountain within the belly of Vr̥tra.
    Indra smashes all the rows (of palings) set up in succession among the torrents by the encloser of the rivers.
11. Establish in us brilliance increasing in benevolence and your great and mighty sovereignty, o Indra, as vanquisher of the peoples.
    Guard those generous to us and protect our patrons. Destine us for wealth and for nourishment bringing good descendants.

I.55 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
8 verses: jagatī

The hymn has a weak omphalos shape, with the paired middle verses 4 and 5 contrasting Indra's central role in peace (4) and war (5), in parallel syntactic

constructions. The hymn begins by describing Indra's vast size and fierce power (vss. 1–3) and ends with an appeal to him to come to our sacrifice bearing gifts (vss. 7–8). Despite the emphasis in the hymn on Indra's martial powers and contrary to Savya's usual practice, no particular heroic deeds are recounted or even mentioned directly; there is simply one indirect allusion to the Vṛtra myth in the final pāda of verse 6, which serves as the transition between the omphalos verses and the final requests.

1. His expansion spreads out even beyond heaven; not even the earth is the counterpart to Indra in greatness.
   Fearsome and mighty, a scorching firebrand for the settled domains, he hones his mace, like a buffalo (its horn), to be piercingly sharp.
2. As the sea's flood receives the rivers, he receives the sprawling (soma-streams?) with his expanses.
   Indra acts the bull to drink the soma. From of old he seeks admiration as a battler by his power.
3. In order to enjoy it [=soma] like a mountain, you are in control of the principles of great manliness.
   Among the gods he shows ever more brightly by his heroism—the powerful one placed in front for every deed.
4. It's just he who displays his eloquence in the woods along with those offering homage, when he proclaims his own dear Indrian (name) among the peoples.
   The bull becomes pleasing, the bull delightful, when, as bounteous one, he impels the nourishing stream (of speech) in peace.
5. It's just he who by his greatness makes great clashes for the peoples, a battler by his power.
   Then indeed they place their trust in turbulent Indra, as he smashes down his mace, his deadly weapon, again and again—
6. For it's he, seeking fame, who's destroying the artfully made seats (of the enemy) across the earth, as he grows strong in power,
   and is making lights free of wolves [=safe] for the worshipful man. The very resolute one released the waters to flow.
7. Let your mind be on giving, o soma-drinker. Hearing our tributes, make your fallow bays turn this way.
   These fervent intentions, which are your coachmen, best at guiding, do not deceive you, o Indra.
8. You bear inexhaustible goods in your hands. The famed one takes undominatable dominance into his body.
   Like wells covered over by their makers are the many resolves within your body, o Indra.

I.56 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: jagatī

Though characterized by rare words and tortuous expressions, both defying easy interpretation, the hymn follows a fairly straightforward trajectory. The ability of soma to strengthen Indra for his great feats is described in the first two verses, which also depict Indra's journey to our sacrifice. His power in general is the subject of the next two verses (3–4), while the last two (5–6) focus on the slaying of Vr̥tra and its cosmogonic effects.

1. This one has raised forth for himself the many dippers of this *well (of soma), as a stallion, all aquiver, raises himself up to [=mounts] a young mare.
   For the great (deed?) he gives himself golden skill [=soma] to drink, having turned his ingenious chariot here, hitched with his fallow bays.
2. Our greetings in profusion, seeking his leadership, (go) seeking to win him, like (rivers) in their converging on the sea.
   With your sharpness, (o Soma,) ascend to the lord of skill, (who is) now the power of ritual distribution, as trackers ascend a mountain.
3. He is surpassing and great in masculine strength, (even) without raising dust. Like the peak of a mountain his power glints with its thrusting,
   (the power) with which his headstrong metal (weapon), in his exhilaration and among those standing by him, brought wily Śuṣṇa down to rest in fetters.
4. If his divine might, strong through you [=poet], accompanies Indra to help (him), as the sun accompanies the dawn,
   (then) he, who by his daring power repels the darkness, raises the dust aloft with a cry of hurrah!
5. When you spread out the immovable foundation [=earth], you set the airy realm on the doorposts of heaven with your lofty power.
   When, o Indra, in (the contest) with the sun as its prize, ecstatic in your exhilaration with the excitement (of soma), you smashed Vr̥tra, (then) you forced out the flood of waters.
6. You set the foundation of heaven and of earth upon their seats with your power as the great one, o Indra.
   You made the waters flow in the exhilaration of the pressed soma; you broke apart all at once the two jaws of Vr̥tra.

I.57 Indra

Savya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: jagatī

This final hymn of the Savya group turns its attention from the recounting of Indra's great (and lesser) deeds to focus on the ritual performance being offered to honor the god (vss. 1–3) and on the participants in that performance: "we" who are "yours," that is, Indra's (vss. 4–5). Only in the final verse (6) is there mention of any of Indra's exploits, with an oblique reference to the Vr̥tra myth that is featured heavily in other Savya hymns.

One of the puzzles of the hymn is the identity of the female addressee in verse 3, "(you,) lovely like Dawn." Oldenberg (tentatively), Geldner, and Renou all suggest that she is the Sacrificer's Wife, but this is quite unlikely. As I have argued elsewhere (Jamison 2011, forthcoming a, forthcoming b), this ritual participant is only being introduced in the late R̥gveda and she is a controversial and polarizing figure there, so it is improbable that she would be addressed without fanfare here. Moreover, the addressee is called upon to bring or assemble material for the sacrifice, a role that the Sacrificer's Wife never has in classical śrauta ritual (see Jamison 1996a passim).

1. For the most bounteous one, the lofty one bringing lofty wealth, for the mighty one of real unbridled force I bring forth my thought—
   for him whose generosity is difficult to restrain as if in a torrent of waters, lifelong generosity opened up to his power.
2. Then will everything be at hand for you to seek it: the soma-pressings of the man who offers oblation (flow) like waters to the depths,
   when the gladdening golden mace of Indra has been whetted, as if on a mountain, to be the piercer.
3. For him the fearsome, much to be admired, assemble with homage (everything) here at the rite, o (you,) lovely like Dawn—
   (for him) whose Indrian name has been made a light, a foundation for fame, like tawny mares for coursing.
4. Here we are—those of yours, o much-praised Indra, who carry on, having seized hold of you, o you providing outstanding goods,
   for none other than you bears up to our songs, o you who long for songs. Gladly receive this speech of ours like war-cries.
5. Abundant is your heroism, o Indra. We are yours: fulfill the desire of this singer, o bounteous one.
   Lofty heaven measures itself against your heroism, and this earth bends to your power.
6. You, Indra, cut that great, wide mountain apart joint by joint with your mace, o mace-wielder.
   You released the confined waters to flow. You acquired all strength exclusively and entirely.

The next seven hymns (I.58–64) are attributed to Nodhas Gautama. His Indra hymns (I.61–63) are especially notable for their verbal agility.

I.58 Agni

Nodhas Gautama
9 verses: jagatī 1–5, triṣṭubh 6–9

Although Nodhas Gautama's poetic intricacy is not as much on display in his Agni hymns as in his Indra hymns, he excels here in his vivid and dense depiction of physical fire, especially the forest fire. In the jagatī portion of the hymn, verses concerning ritual fire (1, 3) alternate with evocations of the unchecked passage of fire in the woods (2, 4–5), while the final four verses (6–9), in triṣṭubh, are only about the ritual fire. The ritual verses focus on the choosing and installation of Agni as Hotar (vss. 1, 3, 6–7), especially in its first enactment by the gods and the human ancestors (see esp. vss. 3, 6).

The counterpoint between wild uncontrollable fire and ritual fire may subtly emphasize what a feat of civilizing was accomplished by taming fire for sacrificial (and domestic) purposes in the legendary past, and how this feat is repeated in the present day. The last two verses (8–9) beg Agni for shelter and protection for us, the singers. Again, the image of a guardian fire may acquire special intensity by contrast with the potentially destructive fire in the wild.

1. Never is the immortal one, born of strength, forced down. When he became Hotar, messenger of Vivasvant,
   he measured across the airy realm along the paths that lead straightest to the goal. In service to the gods he entices them here with the oblation.
2. The unaging one, drawing his own food toward him, thirstily eager to eat, keeps to the thickets.
   His back when he is sprinkled shines like a steed; thundering like the spine of heaven, he has roared.
3. He was placed in front successfully by the Rudras and the Vasus, set down as Hotar, the immortal who conquers wealth,
   like a chariot steering straight among the clans descended from Āyu. The god discloses valuables in due order.
4. Sped by the wind, he spreads himself out among the thickets at will, with his tongues as sickle, powerfully noisy.
   When, Agni, thirstily you rush like a bull upon the woods, black is your course, o unaging one with gleaming waves.
5. With scorching fangs, spurred by the wind he gusts down upon the wood, like a victorious buffalo upon the herd,

advancing upon the imperishable airy realm in his full dimension. The still and the moving fear, and also the winged ones.

6. The Bhr̥gus installed you among the sons of Manu, dear like wealth, easy to invoke for the peoples,
   as Hotar, o Agni, a guest worthy to be chosen, favorable like an ally to the divine race.
7. Whom the seven tongues, whom the cantors choose as Hotar, best sacrificing at the ceremonies,
   to Agni, the nave of all goods, I render service with a pleasurable offering. I beg for a treasure.
8. O son of strength with the might of Mitra, today hold out unbroken shelters to us, your praisers.
   O Agni, child of nourishment, deliver the singer from narrow straits, with your metal strongholds.
9. Become a defense for the singer, o radiant one. Become shelter for bounteous ones, o bounteous one.
   Deliver the singer from narrow straits, Agni. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through (his) insight.

I.59 (Agni) Vaiśvānara

Nodhas Gautama
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Agni in his aspect as Vaiśvānara ("belonging to all men") is the dedicand of this hymn, and the epithet Vaiśvānara occurs once in every verse. The universality of Agni is emphasized throughout. The first and last verses have contrastive *víśva* ("all") expressions: "all the immortals" in 1b contrasting with "belonging to all (human) communities" in 7a. The first two verses situate him as cosmically central, between gods and men and heaven and earth, while in verse 3 he is the center that attracts everything else within him. A different kind of universality is asserted in verses 5–6, where the signature deeds of Indra are attributed to Agni and he is called by Indra's standard epithet, "Vr̥tra-smasher." This rhetorical ploy makes him the equivalent of the most powerful of the gods, hence in some sense the embodiment of divinity itself.

The hymn also shows an omphalos structure. The outer ring (vss. 1 and 7) noted above, as well as an inner ring defined by the identification of Agni as king (vss. 3 and 5), point to the middle verse 4 as omphalos. And in a hymn of reasonably straightforward syntax and imagery, verse 4 does stand out for its relative obscurity. Why this verse should be freighted with the message of the hymn

is not entirely clear, but it brings together the cosmic (the two world-halves) with the human, in the form of the sacrifice, where the Hotar offers hymns to Agni, who himself regularly serves as Hotar (see, e.g., the preceding hymn I.58). Thus the centrality of Agni for both the cosmos and the mundane world is affirmed in this, the central verse of the hymn, as is the interpenetration of Agni's twofold nature as an element of the cosmos (the son of Heaven and Earth, possessed of the sun) and as a participating member of human society (the Hotar, recipient of hymns).

It is worthy of note that, in contrast to the last hymn (I.58) with its graphic depiction of actual fire, this hymn contains almost no mention of Agni's physical qualities.

1. The other fires are just twigs of you, Agni. In you do all the immortals bring themselves to euphoria.
   Vaiśvānara, you are the navel of the settlements. Like a pillar, as prop you hold the peoples fast.
2. The head of heaven, the navel of the earth is Agni. And he became the spoked wheel of the two world-halves.
   You did the gods beget as god, Vaiśvānara, as light just for the Ārya (people).
3. Like the rays (placed) firm in the sun, in Vaiśvānara, in Agni have goods been placed—
   those that are in the mountains, in the plants, in the waters, that are among men—of (all) this you are king.
4. Like the two lofty world-halves for their son [=Agni], like Manu's skill, the human Hotar (brings) hymns—
   many (hymns), (like) exuberant maidens—for him possessed of the sun, him whose bluster is real, for the most manly Vaiśvānara.
5. Even beyond lofty heaven does your greatness project, o Jātavedas Vaiśvānara.
   You are king of the communities belonging to the sons of Manu. Through combat you made a wide realm for the gods.
6. I now proclaim the greatness of the bull, whom the Pūrus attend upon as Vṛtra-smasher.
   Vaiśvānara, Agni, having smashed the Dasyu, shook the wooden barriers, cut down Śambara.
7. Vaiśvānara, belonging to all communities by his greatness, worthy of the sacrifice among the Bharadvājas, far-radiant,
   Agni, displaying liberality, at the (place of) Śātavaneya of many stratagems, is awakened with hundredfold (riches).

I.60 Agni

Nodhas Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Two double aspects of Agni, touched on in the two previous Agni hymns by Nodhas Gautama, are united in this brief hymn. On the one hand, Agni's primal installation in the sacrifice by the ancestors of humankind is contrasted with his regular re-installation by the current sacrificers (see esp. vs. 2ab, but also throughout). In fact, the original theft of fire from heaven by Mātariśvan, who bestowed it on the legendary Bhr̥gu, ends the first verse. In several places (2c, 3d, 4b, 4d) it is not possible to determine from the verb form whether the poet is referring to the distant and legendary past or the recent past of the current ritual, though unfortunately English imposes the choice. The aorist forms in question often refer to the immediate past, and so we have translated them ("has been set down," etc.), but an unmarked past ("was set down," etc.) is far from excluded. It is quite likely that the poet wished to leave the question open.

The other double aspect treated is Agni's dual role in the sacrifice: he both acts as priest and is the object of ritual activity by human priests. See especially verse 2b, where the Uśij ("fire-priests") present oblations to him, and 4a, where Agni is identified as an Uśij (as well as a Hotar, in 4b).

1. Glorious conveyor and beacon of the rite, pursuing (his ritual duties) well, the messenger who immediately (reaches) his goal,
   of double birth, celebrated like wealth—Mātariśvan brought him as a gift to Bhr̥gu.
2. His command do both sides follow in presenting their oblations: his (ancient) fire-priests and mortals (now).
   He has been set down as Hotar even in front of heaven, as clan-lord worthy of the asking, the ritual adept among the clans.
3. Ever newer acclaim from us, from our heart, should reach him as he is being born, the honey-tongued one,
   whom the sons of Manu who sacrifice regularly in ritual community, who dispense ritual delight, the Āyus, have begotten.
4. Himself a fire-priest, pure and good, he has been installed among the clans of the sons of Manu as the Hotar worthy to be chosen.
   As domestic ally, house-lord in the home, Agni has became wealth-lord of wealth.
5. It is you, Agni, that we Gotamas celebrate with our thoughts as lord of wealth,
   grooming you like a swift, prize-bearing (horse). – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through (his) insight.

I.61 Indra

Nodhas Gautama
16 verses: triṣṭubh

The three Indra hymns by Nodhas share a ritual context: judging from their last verses (I.61.16, 62.13, 63.9) they were all composed to accompany the Hāriyojana ("Fallow-bay-yoking") oblation, when Indra's pair of horses is yoked up for the god's return journey to heaven after the sacrifice is complete. The parts of these hymns before the final verse do not seem to reflect this ritual moment, and the three hymns are quite different, though they all display Nodhas's remarkable poetic skill.

This first hymn, I.61, is a masterpiece of intricate structure and verbal trickery. We will summarize the main points here, but for more detailed treatment see the lengthy discussion in Jamison (2007: 60–68). The most obvious structural device is the fronted repetition of a deictic pronoun: each of the sixteen verses except the last (which is an extra-hymnic summary verse) begins with either the dative *asmaí* "for him" or the genitive *asyá* "of him," followed by two emphasizing particles, always referring to Indra (except in vs. 12—see below). The dative sequence is the more common and frames the hymn (vss. 1–6, 8, 12, 15); the genitive sequence is found primarily in the center of the hymn (vss. 7, 9–11, 13–14).

This rigid structural device both parallels and counterpoints the semantic structure of the hymn. In general in this hymn the dative verses express the ritual here-and-now, with the production and presentation of hymns and ritual offerings "to/for just this one," while the genitive verses concern Indra's great deeds. Especially in the dative verses numerous co-referential adjectival datives reinforce the fronted pronoun, as well as strategically placed dative tokens of the god's name. Curiously, in the genitive verses the genitive several times (vss. 7, 10, 11) seems to have quite a loose syntactic connection to the rest of the sentence, and Indra may appear in another case in the same verse, as in

> I.61.10ab *asyéd evá śávasā śuṣántaṃ, ví vṛścad vájreṇa vṛtrám índraḥ*
> Of just this one [gen.]—in (his) expansion Indra [nom.] hewed apart snorting Vṛtra with his mace.

But what may appear superficially to be clumsy composition serves a larger structural purpose: it seems that the logical structure of the hymn requires a two-way opposition, between dative *asmaí* and something else: the something else is genitive *asyá* even when a different case form might have been more appropriate, for a variety of other cases would have obscured the bipartite contrastive structure of the hymn. Here we see an example of clausal morphosyntax subordinated to and indeed distorted by the imposition of a larger literary and rhetorical pattern.

The poet Nodhas also lays a few traps for us by playing on the expectations he has created. Most notable of them is verse 12, which begins with the dative *asmaí* and therefore appears to return us from the mythological past to the realm of the current-day poet of verses 1–5, an expectation reinforced by the verb *prá bharā*,

a standard lexeme for presenting a hymn to a divinity. But the phrase in verse 12 quickly goes awry. At the opening of the next pāda, where Indra's name has been prominently placed in previous verses (*índrāya* 1d, 4d, 5b, 8b), we find, most shockingly, the name of his arch-enemy, *vṛtrā́ya*, immediately followed by the accusative object *vájram*, Indra's weapon, not the word for hymn we were expecting. The poet has simply tricked us, having laid a trap with conventional phraseology and syntax and with the stylistic patterns established earlier in the hymn. He also skillfully exploits the morphological ambiguity of the verb form *bharā*: given the pattern set in verses 1–5 we are primed to interpret *bharā* as a 1st sg. subjunctive ("I shall present"), but as the half verse unfolds, it becomes clear that *bharā* must rather be taken as a metrically lengthened 2nd singular imperative ("bear down!").

The meter of this hymn is often irregular, with a number of ten-syllable lines, but again this irregularity should not be taken as a sign of poor poetic technique. Rather the hymn seems to be phrase-driven rather than meter-driven, and the metrical rests that result from "missing syllables" serve to isolate and emphasize crucial nominal phrases—an effect also heightened by the copious examples of alliteration.

With all the poetic fireworks on display the actual contents of the hymn may seem almost beside the point, but we will provide a brief sketch. The first five verses ("dative verses") are variations on a theme: the poet's verbal offerings to Indra. The sixth verse, also a dative verse, modulates to the distant past and the god Tvaṣṭar's gift of the newly fashioned mace to Indra. Verse 7 combines two rare Indra myths: his appropriation of his father's soma right after his birth and the Emuṣa myth, in which the god Viṣṇu steals a mess of rice porridge while Indra shoots the boar Emuṣa. (For further on this myth, see Introduction, p. 40.) Verses 8–12 treat the Vṛtra myth for the most part, though with some detours. Verses 13–15 generalize the praise of Indra's deeds and bring it back to the present time and to the present poet, Nodhas, who names himself in verse 14, while the final verse, 16, summarizes the hymn that precedes and names the ritual application, the "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation.

It is difficult to do justice to this tour de force of poetic craft, and many of its finest effects have not been discussed here. It is, unfortunately, even more difficult to do justice to it in English translation.

1. Just for this one, powerful, precipitous, mighty, do I bring forward praise
   like a pleasurable offering—
   for the one equal to song, not poor, (do I bring) a laud—for Indra (I
   bring) sacred formulations best bestowed.
2. Just to this one I have held it out like a pleasurable offering. I bring out a
   song; I thrust it out with a good twist
   to Indra, with heart, with mind, with inspired thought. For the
   primordial lord the insights groom themselves.
3. Just to this one this utmost sun-winning song do I bring with
   my mouth,
   to strengthen the most munificent patron with the invitations of my
   thoughts, with their good twists.

4. Just for this one I put together praise—like a carpenter a chariot for the one whose gear it is—
   and hymns with a good twist for the one whose vehicle is hymns—for wise Indra (praise) that sets everything in motion.
5. Just for this one, for Indra, do I anoint the chant with my tongue [/the offering ladle], as one anoints a team when seeking fame—
   to extol the hero accustomed to giving [/gifts], the splitter of strongholds whose fame is sung.
6. Just for this one Tvaṣṭar fashioned the mace of best workmanship, the reverberating one, for battle [/for joy],
   with which he found the mortal spot of that very Vr̥tra, as, gaining mastery, he thrust with the thrusting (mace), while conferring (who knows) how much.
7. Just this one—he, having already drunk in an instant the nourishment of his great (father), the pleasing foods at his mother's soma-pressings—
   while Viṣṇu the stronger stole the cooked (rice-porridge), he pierced the boar through the stone, (Indra) the archer.
8. Just for this one, for Indra, even the ladies, the Wives of the Gods, wove a chant at the Vr̥tra-smashing.
   He held encircled broad heaven and earth; they did not encompass his greatness.
9. Just this one—his greatness projected beyond heaven and earth, beyond the midspace.
   Sovereign king, Indra, sung by all in the house, a reverberant tankard, waxed strong for battle [/for joy].
10. Just this one—with his swelling strength Indra hewed apart snorting Vr̥tra with his mace.
    The streams, pent up like cows, he released toward fame, of one mind (with them), for giving.
11. Just this one—the rivers with their glittering came to rest when he held them encircled with his mace.
    Performing the master's part, showing favor to the pious man, the victorious one made a ford for Turvīti.
12. Toward just this one, toward Vr̥tra, bear down the mace, thrusting, gaining mastery, conferring (who knows) how much.
    Scrape through him crosswise as if through the joints of a cow, dispatching the floods of waters to wander.
13. Of just this one, the precipitous—proclaim his former deeds anew with solemn words,
    when, propelling his own weapons to battle, showing his mettle, he dissolves his rivals.

14. Just this one—in fear of his birth both the firmly fixed mountains and heaven and earth thrust against each.
    Constantly calling upon him [=Indra], who is a (protective) arm for the seeker, in an instant Nodhas [=the poet] will be (there) for his [=Indra's] (next?) manly deed.
15. Just to this one has this (soma-drinking?) been conceded by them [=gods], since he alone won (it?), becoming master of much.
    Indra aided Etaśa, who was contending for the sun; he will aid the soma-presser contending for good horses.
16. Thus have the Gotamas made you sacred formulations for the "Fallow-bay-yoking" (oblation), with a good twist, o Indra.
    Do you confer on them an insight with all its ornaments. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come bringing goods through his insight.

I.62 Indra

Nodhas Gautama
13 verses: triṣṭubh

The poetic ingenuity of Nodhas is also on display in this hymn, though in somewhat different ways from his tricks in I.61. The hymn is full of phonetic play and alliteration, with numerous somewhat aberrant morphological forms generated for this play. Repetition and variation on this repetition are also conspicuous—for example, the word *sanā́t* ("from of old") opening 8a, 10a, 12a, with teasingly close forms (*sánemi* 9a, *sánīḍā* 10a) alternating with it.

The hymn falls into two main sections. The first five verses are the more conventional—if poetically rich—part, treating the Vala myth and especially the role of the Aṅgirases in it. (Interestingly, the Vala myth is absent from I.61.) The first half of verse 6 seems to summarize this deed of Indra's extravagantly: "This is his most conspicuous deed, the dearest wonder of the wondrous one." But Nodhas tricks us here, for the second half of the verse concerns an entirely different and much more obscure deed of Indra's, the swelling of the four, probably celestial, rivers. From 6cd through verse 10 we meet fleetingly recounted fragments of other myths, but these myths seem connected at a structural level, since they involve female figures in pairs or groups working reciprocally or jointly: the rivers of 6cd, the two world-halves of 7 (compared to twin consorts), Night and Dawn (compared to young girls) in 8, black and red cows in 9, and streams again in 10, apparently returning to the rivers of 6cd. In the second half of 10 we encounter a surfeit of females: two words for wives (*jáni* and *pátnī*) as well as sisters, all offering friendship to Indra. These females may refer to the streams of the first half of the verse, or to the thoughts converging on Indra in the next verse (11), which are also compared to wives. Most likely the reference in

10cd is double, providing a transition from the cosmic mythological realm in verses 6–10 to the ritual here-and-now of verses 11–13. The hymn ends, like I.61, with a verse (13) specifically applicable to the "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation, and like I.61 (vss. 14 and 16) mentions both the poet Nodhas and his clan, the Gotamas.

1. We think up a fortifying song for the forceful one who longs for hymns, just as the Aṅgirases did.
   A chant with the good twists of a praiser we chant to the one worthy of chant, to the widely famed superior man.
2. Present your great reverence to the great one, a songful melody to the forceful one,
   with which our forefathers, the Aṅgirases, knowing the track [/word], chanting, found the cows.
3. At the desire of Indra and the Aṅgirases, Saramā found the wellspring for posterity.
   Bṛhaspati: he split the rock; he found the cows. The superior men bellowed together with the ruddy (cows).
4. He with (his flock) of good rhythm, he with rhythm, with the seven inspired poets, with the Navagvas, he, the resounding one, with sound (split) the rock.
   With the hastening ones, o able Indra, you cleft the bolt, with a roar you cleft Vala with the Daśagvas.
5. Being hymned by the Aṅgirases, o wondrous one, you uncovered the blinding darkness [/soma stalk] along with the dawn, with the sun, with the cows.
   You spread out the back of the earth, Indra; you propped up the nearer realm of heaven.
6. This is his most conspicuous deed, the dearest wonder of the wondrous one,
   that he made the four nearer (celestial?) rivers with their honeyed floods swell in their eddying.
7. Another time, with his chants that were being sung, the irrepressible one uncovered the age-old pair belonging to the same nest [=the two worlds].
   As Bhaga [/a (good) portion] (supports) his two consorts, he of very wondrous power supported the two world-halves in farthest heaven.
8. From of old the two young girls of distinct forms, (ever) regenerating, (go) around heaven and earth along their own courses—
   Night with her black, Dawn with her gleaming white shapes progress one after the other.
9. Possessing very wondrous power, doing good work, the son with his strength supported the partnership to its full extent.
   You placed the "cooked" (milk) even within the "raw" (cows), the gleaming white milk in the black and in the red (cows).

10. From of old the streams coming from the same nest, unquenchable and immortal, guard their commandments with their powers.
    For many thousands (of aeons?), like lady wives, the sisters [=streams? thoughts?] offer friendship to the unabashed one.
11. The age-old thoughts, with reverence, with chants, seeking goods, have run anew (to you), wondrous one.
    Like eager wives their eager husband, the inspired thoughts caress you, you strong one.
12. Though (originating) from of old, the riches in your hand do not become exhausted, nor do they give out, wondrous one.
    You are brilliant, Indra, you are resolute and insightful. Do your best for us with your abilities, able one.
13. For the age-old "Fallow-bay-yoking" (oblation) Gotama has fashioned a newer sacred formulation, Indra—
    Nodhas (has fashioned it) for us for good guidance, o forceful one. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through his insight.

I.63 Indra

Nodhas Gautama
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The fondness of Nodhas for initial repetition is on display in this hymn, where almost every verse begins with *t(u)vám* "you," with a distracted vocative *ind(a)ra* positioned after an early caesura. The hymn lacks the verbal intricacy of the last two (I.61–62), though it is full of philological problems.

The tone of the hymn also differs from the two previous ones: it is far more martial and concerned with Indra's fearsome power. His aggressive power, even just after birth, is highlighted in verse 1, and the following verses quickly allude to the destruction of various foes, usually for the benefit of one of his clients (e.g., Kutsa, vs. 3) or for mortals in general. Like the last two hymns, this one ends with a summary verse applicable to the "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation.

1. You are great, Indra, you who, on just being born, with your tempests put heaven and earth in (the path of your) onslaught,
   so that all the vast masses, even the mountains, though firmly fixed, stirred like dust-motes in fear of you.
2. When, Indra, you pursued hither your two fallow bays who follow separate commandments, the singer placed the mace in your two arms,
   with which, o you whose resolve is not to be deflected, you dispatch the foes and their many strongholds, o much invoked one.

3. You are trusty, Indra, and bold against them. You are master of the Ṛbhus, favorable to men; you are victorious.
   You smashed Śuṣṇa in his (war-)band, when strengthening nourishment and the axle-pin (were at stake), for the young, heaven-bright Kutsa, in partnership.
4. You then, Indra, as partner provided the spur, when you knotted up Vṛtra, you mace-bearer of bullish deeds,
   when, you champion of bullish mind, you cut apart the Dasyus in their womb far away, as one who is victorious at will.
5. You then, Indra, intending no harm to mortals, in your displeasure (you opened up the doors) even of the stronghold,
   opened the barriers for the steed (that comes) from us. As if with a deadly weapon, mace-bearer, pierce the foes.
6. On you then, Indra, the superior men call, at the winning of the flood, in the contest whose prize is the sun.
   This help of yours here in the clash when prizes (are at stake), o autonomous one, has become something unshakeable.
7. You then, mace-bearing Indra, attacking, split seven fortifications for Purukutsa, one after the other.
   When at will you twisted them like ritual grass for Sudās, o king, from narrowness you made wide space for Pūru.
8. You, god Indra, will make this bright refreshment swell for us as waters do in their circling,
   the refreshment with which, o champion, you will extend yourself toward us like nourishment to flow everywhere.
9. (This hymn) has been made for you, Indra, by the Gotamas; sacred formulations have been spoken with reverence to your two fallow bay horses.
   Bring a well-ornamented prize here to us. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through his insight.

I.64 Maruts

Nodhas Gautama
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

Exuberant in language and crammed with vivid description, this hymn treats the usual Marut themes. The poet begins by exhorting himself to produce a worthy and well-crafted hymn for these gods (vs. 1), and proceeds to do just that. Verses 2–4 describe the Maruts' birth and beauty, while verses 5–8 turn to their role in the thunderstorm, with comparisons to various wild animals found in verses 7–8. Verse 9 is a pun on the word *ródasī*, which in the first half of the verse is in the dual

number and refers to the two world-halves, while in the second half it must refer to the goddess Rodasī (usually differently accented *rodasī́*), the regular consort of the Maruts. (For the same pun, see I.167.4, also in a Marut hymn.) Further description of their boisterous behavior occupies verses 10–11.

In verse 12 the poet returns to the beginning, by referring to the hymn "we" are offering to the Maruts. Reestablishing the relationship between the mortal worshipers and the Maruts allows him to make the transition to the boons we ask of them. After providing a model of the fortunate man who receives the Maruts' aid in verse 13, the poet calls on the gods to grant good things to the patrons and the worshipers in general (vss. 14–15).

1. To the bullish troop, good battlers and ritual adepts, present a
   well-turned (hymn), o Nodhas—to the Maruts.
   As one clever in mind and with dexterous hands ornaments his work,
   I ornament the hymns standing ready at the rites.
2. They were born as the lofty bulls of heaven, the young bloods of Rudra,
   lordly, unblemished,
   pure white, blazing like suns, like consummate warriors with their drops
   as banners, of frightful form.
3. The young unaging Rudras, who smite the miser though themselves not
   poor, have grown strong like mountains.
   All earthly creations, even the firm ones, do they stir up, and the
   heavenly ones as well, by their might.
4. With bright unguents they anoint themselves for wonder; on their breasts
   they arrange brilliants for beauty.
   On their shoulders spears have rubbed. They were born all at once by
   their own power, the men of heaven.
5. Performing the master's part, the boisterous ones who care for the
   stranger have produced winds and lightning flashes with their powers.
   The shakers milk the udder for heavenly (goods [=rain]). Swirling they
   swell the earth with milk.
6. The Maruts of good drops swell the waters, the ghee-rich milk, as they
   stand ready at the rites.
   They lead (their horse) out to piss like a prize-seeking steed. They milk
   the thundering, imperishable well-spring.
7. Buffalos, masters of artifice, of bright radiance, self-powerful like
   mountains yet quick streaming,
   like wild elephants you chew up the woods, when you have yoked your
   own powers to those of your ruddy (horses).
8. Like lions the discerning ones keep roaring, beautifully marked like
   mottled (deer), granting all possessions.
   Animating the nights, urgently they (join) together with their dappled
   (mares), with their spears—those who have a snake's fury in their
   strength.

9. Salute the two world-halves [=*ródasī*], you who are splendor in a flock,
   who accompany the superior man [=Indra], champions with a snake's fury in your strength.
   She [=Rodasī], like lightning lovely to look at, has mounted your chariot like the ensign on chariot boxes, o Maruts.
10. Granting all possessions, at home with riches, linked with powers, copious,
   the archers have taken their arrows in their fists, the superior men of endless tempests and bullish bangles.
11. With their golden wheel-rims the milk-strong ones keep pounding the mountains like wayfarers (pounding the road with their feet)—
   unruly battlers, self-propelling, stirring (even) the fixed, acting headstrong, the Maruts with their glinting spears.
12. The ardent, pure, winning, unbounded offspring of Rudra do we hymn with an invocation.
   The space-traversing, powerful Marut flock, possessing the silvery drink, bullish—follow it for splendor.
13. That mortal has now stood out beyond the people in strength by your aid—the one whom you helped, Maruts.
   He bears away the prize for himself with his steeds, bears away the stakes with his men, bears resolve worthy of the asking. He dwells peacefully; he thrives.
14. O Maruts, confer on the bounteous (patrons) brilliant bluster ever to be celebrated, difficult to overcome in battles,
   gaining the stakes, worthy of hymns, governing all domains. May we thrive in life and lineage for a hundred winters.
15. Now, Maruts, confer on us durable wealth consisting of heroes, victorious in the clash,
   swelling in hundreds and thousands. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, rich through (his) insight.

The next nine hymns (I.65–73) are ascribed to Parāśara Śāktya and are dedicated only to Agni. The first six (65–70) are in the relatively rare dvipadā virāj meter, while the last three are in triṣṭubh. Despite the difference in meter, there is a strong sense of unity in this group of hymns, in phraseology, in style, and in theme. Moreover, somewhat in Vālakhilya fashion there are several paired hymns, especially I.65–66 and I.68–69 (with I.70 acting as a climatic third to that pairing).

The most important theme running through the series is Agni's function as the locus and target of joint action undertaken by men and by gods, and as the representative of the unity thus produced. In this capacity for mortals he is named the Vaiśvānara fire ("fire belonging to all men"—for another, nearby Agni Vaiśvānara hymn see I.59), and the series I.68–70 contains an extended pun on

the constituents of this epithet. In the divine realm the joint action of the gods is represented by the Tānūnaptra rite and its foundation myth, treated in I.72 (see Proferes 2007: 51–61). These complementary aspects of Agni are not restricted to the hymns just named, but surface throughout this series, which thus shows a rare thematic unity.

I.65 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: dvipadā virāj

As is generally the case with dvipadā virāj meter, the hymn falls into two-verse units, essentially equivalent to a single trimeter verse (forty syllables, versus forty-four [triṣṭubh] or forty-eight [jagatī]). The five-syllable units in which the verses are organized lend themselves to brief, discrete semantic and syntactic units, producing a mosaic-like effect. In this hymn, as in the following one, the mosaic fragments are often similes—especially pronounced here in the middle verses 5–6, though found throughout. Each simile highlights a particular aspect of Agni.

The hymn also follows a ritual and mythological trajectory. It begins with the hidden Agni (vs. 1), alluding in mythological terms to the well-known story of Agni's flight and rediscovery by the gods, which is treated in verses 2–3, but also, in ritual terms, to the fire hidden in the wood before kindling. This kindling is accomplished by the end of the hymn, where Agni spreads through the firewood and awakens at dawn, conspicuous and visible from afar (vss. 7–10). The relationship of Agni to waters, in his identity as Apām Napāt, is another theme in the hymn (vss. 4–7, 9), though the epithet Apām Napāt is not mentioned.

1. Hiding in secret like a thief with livestock,
   yoking homage, conveying homage:
2. (You) did the clever, of one accord, follow along your tracks;
   all those worthy of the sacrifice reverently approached you.
3. The gods followed the commandments of truth.
   Like heaven (enclosing) the earth was his enclosing.
4. With wonder the waters strengthen the lovely child,
   well-begotten in the lap of truth, in its womb.
5. Like thriving that brings delight, like a broad (place of) peaceful dwelling,
   like a mountain a source of benefit, like a gush (of water) that brings
      blessings;
6. Like a steed on its course, launched in a surge,
   like a river (sending) its gush: who can obstruct him?
7. Akin to the rivers, like a brother to his sisters,
   (yet,) like a king his vassals, he devours the wood.

8. When, sped by the wind, he has spread out through the wood,
   Agni cuts the hair of the earth.
9. He hisses like a wild goose sitting in the waters;
   awakening at dawn, he is the most conspicuous to the clans by his intention.
10. Like soma, a ritual expert, begotten of truth;
    ranging widely like livestock with their young, far-radiant.

I.66 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: dvipadā virāj

Like the previous hymn, this one is constructed of short phrases often consisting of similes. The similes here alternate between images of peace and prosperity and those of turbulent combat, sometimes strikingly juxtaposed, as in the second half of verse 3 or the contrasting halves of verse 4.

Toward the end of the hymn we find several puzzles, which have elicited widely differing interpretations—especially verse 8 with its double mention of twins (*yamá*). In our view the end of the hymn builds toward a ritual climax, found in the final two verses of the hymn (9–10), and verse 8 sets the stage for this, the early-morning sacrifice, by mentioning the risen sun as the twin already born and the soma, not yet pressed, as the twin awaiting birth—both also identified with Agni. Although these identifications would break the pattern of constant reference to Agni set in the earlier parts of the hymn (and our interpretation therefore gives us pause), the final pair of verses also move beyond the stasis of repeated Agni-similes and depict a ritual moment, prefigured, in our view, by the mention of other ritual entities in verse 8.

Note the ring-compositional element, the "sight of the sun," in the first half of verse 1 and the last words of verse 10. This double mention may support our interpretation of verse 8 as mentioning the risen sun.

1. Glittering like wealth, like the sight of the sun,
   like life-breath, like one's own son;
2. Like a swooping (bird), ever restless, he clings to the wood;
   like a milk-cow (yielding) milk, (he is) blazing and widely radiant.
3. Delightful like a home, he maintains peace;
   ripe like grain, a conqueror of peoples.
4. Having rhythm like a seer, lauded among the clans;
   well treated like a winning horse, he confers vitality.
5. Whose blaze is beyond domestication like one's own will;
   like a wife in the lap, enough for anyone.

6. When, glittering, he has flashed like a white (horse) among the clans,
   like a brilliant chariot (he is) dazzling in combats.
7. Set loose like an army, he initiates an onslaught,
   like the arrow of an archer with its dazzling point.
8. (The one) twin [=Sun?] has been born, (the other) twin [=Soma?] is what is to be born:
   (the one [=Sun]) is the lover of girls [=Dawns?]; (the other [=Soma]) the husband of women [=cows' (milk)?].
9. With our movable (goods [=livestock]) and with our settled household, we,
   like cows (going) home, approach him, on your behalf, when he has been kindled.
10. Like a river its gush, he has sent forth those [=butter offerings?] heading downward.
    The cows cry out upon seeing the sun.

I.67 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: dvipadā virāj

Although this hymn contains several similes (see vss. 1, 2, 5, 10), the simile is not the organizing principle of the hymn, unlike I.65–66, and metaphors and personifications share the stage with formally marked similes.

Agni's disappearance and hiding (vss. 3, 6–7) and his discovery by the gods (vss. 3–4), and by implication by pious mortals (vss. 7–8), provide the mythological theme of the hymn. The physical counterpart to this mythic concealment is the immanence of fire in wood, in plants, and in water, mentioned at the beginning (vs. 1) and end (vss. 9–10) of the hymn. For similar themes, see I.65.

1. A conqueror amid the wood, an ally among mortals;
   like a king he demands obedience without fail.
2. Like peace that brings prosperity, like good resolve;
   he has become the very attentive Hotar who carries the oblations.
3. Taking in his hand all manly powers,
   sitting down in secret, he sets the gods in (the path of) his onslaught.
4. The superior men, producing insights, find him here,
   when they have recited mantras fashioned by the heart.
5. Like Aja (Ekapad) he supports the broad earth;
   he props up heaven with mantras that come true.
6. Protect the dear tracks of the livestock.
   During your whole lifetime, Agni, you go from hiding place to hiding place.

7. He who perceives him gone into hiding,
   and who has taken his seat at the stream of truth—
8. Those who unbind (the fetters of deceit?), serving truths —
   for him, because of this, he [=Agni] has proclaimed good things.
9. He who [=Agni]—along with his offspring—sprouts greatly
   in the sprouts and within the fruitful (plants),
10. (He is) the bright apparition in the house of the waters through his whole lifetime.
   Like clever men an abode, the wise have made a seat (for him), having measured it out completely.

I.68 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: dvipadā virāj

Breaking the pattern of Parāśara's previous dvipadā virāj hymns (I.65–67), this one contains only a single, conventional simile (vs. 9). Its focus is instead on ritual, and especially on the joint activity performed by "all" in their separate ways and the rewards they share because of it (see esp. vss. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). Although the identity of the "all" is never made explicit, we believe that the poet is depicting the communal fire shared and jointly tended by the united clans, and that the "all" (*víśve*) are the members of the separate clans serving their shared fire (the Vaiśvānara fire [see Proferes 2007: 46–49 and passim]). In fact, in reading this hymn with its twin, I.69, the motif of the Vaiśvānara fire emerges strongly. In this hymn the focus is on *víśva* "all," in the next hymn on *náraḥ* "(superior) men," while at the end of I.70 the two words are found sequentially (vss. 9–10). These are exactly the two elements found in the *vr̥ddhi* bahuvrīhi compound *vaiśvānará* "belonging to all men," the very name of the shared clan fire, a word that never appears in this hymn sequence. Thus, I.68–70 contain a buried but persistent pun, with one half of the compound allotted to each of the first two hymns until they are reunited in the third. The phonological resemblance between *víśva* "all" and *víś* "clan" is also in play, though the two words are etymologically unrelated.

1. Bringing (the sacrifice) to readiness, bustling about, he approaches heaven.
   He discloses the still and the moving through the nights,
2. When, alone of all these gods,
   the god encompasses (them) by his greatness.
3. All take pleasure in your resolve because of this:
   that you are born alive from the desiccated (wood), o god.
4. All have a share in divinity and in its name,
   as they serve immortal truth in their own ways.

5. The promptings of truth, the vision of truth—
   all have performed their tasks lifelong.
6. Whoever will do ritual service to you or who will do his best for you,
   to him distribute wealth as the attentive one.
7. As the Hotar, he has taken his seat among the progeny of Manu.
   Just he is now the lord of these (offspring/clans? and) of riches.
8. They seek the seed mutually among themselves;
   no fools—they act in unison, each according to his own skill.
9. They take pleasure in his resolve like sons in their father's—
   the powerful ones who obey his command.
10. Bringing much livestock, he has opened wide the doors of wealth.
    He, the master of the house, has emblazoned heaven's vault with stars.

I.69 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: dvipadā virāj

Twinned with the preceding hymn (I.68), this hymn also treats the common clan-fire, which serves as a symbol of unity during joint action undertaken by ordinarily separate groups, although this theme is subtly conveyed. In the first few verses there are only indirect hints: Agni "encompasses" an unspecified set of objects (vs. 2); in verse 4 he takes his place "in the middle" and is compared to a "friendly __ among the people"—parallel passages suggest that "ally" should be supplied in this last phrase.

The clans are mentioned explicitly in verse 5, which describes Agni's extension through the clans, who are brought together, along with their superior men, in the next verse (6). As already noted in the introduction to I.68, these men, the *náraḥ*, supply the second part of the name of the clan-fire, Vaiśvānara. Agni's reciprocal relationship and joint action with these men are described in verses 7–8, and, in our view, verse 9 describes the brilliance of the newly kindled clan-fire, which is the focus of the shared sacrificial activity of the united clans. This interpretation is supported by an adjective qualifying Agni in that verse: *sáṃjñāta-rūpa*. Although most translators take this word as meaning "having a well-known form" on the basis of the verbal root √*jñā* "recognize," the idiom *sáṃ-jñā* has a different and very specific meaning "come to an agreement, act in unison." This very idiom is found in the previous, twinned hymn, in verse 8, where it describes the mutual action of all the clans, each contributing its own set of skills. Therefore in verse 9 of this hymn Agni is described as the very form or representation of the agreement reached by the clans, as well as the focus of the ritual activity that results from that agreement. (It is worth noting that the final hymn of the Ṛgveda, self-consciously advocating unity, contains two occurrences of this lexeme [X.191.2b, d].)

The final verse (10) describes the successful dawn sacrifice and the rising of the sun that accompanies it. The rejoicing of "all" at the sight of the sun introduces into this hymn the "all" that dominated the paired hymn I.68.

1. The blazing one, blazing bright like the lover of Dawn,
   has filled the two conjoined (world-halves), like the light of heaven.
2. (Though just) born, you encompass (them) in accordance with your will.
   You will become the father of the gods, although you are their son.
3. Discerning Agni is the undistracted ritual expert;
   like the udder of cows he is the sweetness of foods.
4. Like a friendly (ally) among the people, though quick to anger,
   (he has) taken his seat in the middle, bringing joy to the house.
5. Like a son just born, bringing joy to the house;
   well treated like a winning horse, he has traversed the clans.
6. When I have summoned the clans of the same nest along with their men,
   by his divinity Agni should attain all things.
7. None transgress these commandments of yours,
   since you have given attentive hearing to these men.
8. This is your wondrous power: that on (the same) day,
   yoked with the same men, you carry out your tasks.
9. Ruddy and far-radiant like the lover of Dawn,
   he will be conspicuous to him [=the sacrificer?] as the one whose very
   form has been produced in unison.
10. Carrying him themselves, they [=priests] open wide the doors.
    All cry out upon seeing the sun.

I.70 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
11 verses: dvipadā virāj

As was noted in the introduction to I.68, this last of the Parāśara's dvipadā virāj hymns to Agni is the climax of a sequence of three whose disguised subject is Agni Vaiśvānara, the clan-fire "belonging to all men." The Vaiśvānara aspects of I.70 were already discussed by Proferes (2007: 48). In particular he points to the movement toward the unity of a single focal fire (vs. 9) contrasted with the separation of this fire into many, separately served fires (vs. 10), though he fails to mention the verbal encoding of the underlying compound members in these climactic verses 9–10, where *all* (*víśve*) bear tribute to the fire (vs. 9) and *men* (*náraḥ*) serve him in many places (vs. 10).

This hymn also widens the view somewhat, for not only does the fire belong to all men, but simultaneously to the gods (see the paired divine and human in vss. 2, 4, and 6), and it is also related to all natural objects (see vss. 3–4, 7), expressed in series of oppositional merisms, such as "the moving and the still" (vss. 3, 7).

This final hymn of the dvipadā virāj series has eleven verses, rather than the ten found in the other hymns. This eleventh, unpaired verse describes the power, skill, and eagerness of the martial Agni, and thus expresses one of the roles for which the Vaiśvānara fire is especially designed: to unite the clans into a force able to oppose its enemies. (See Proferes 2007 passim.) It may be taken as a summary verse for the entire sequence of Vaiśvānara hymns.

1. Might we vanquish the many inspired thoughts of the stranger by our inspired thought;
   might bright-blazing Agni attain all things (for us),
2. Watching over all the divine commandments
   and the races of the people descended from Manu.
3. He who is the embryo of the waters, the embryo of the woods,
   and the embryo of the still, the embryo of the moving,
4. Even in the rock (as well as) within the house,
   every immortal, like every (member) of the clans, is very attentive to him.
5. For Agni, the protector of riches on earth, does ritual service (for him [=the mortal])
   who does ritual service for him [=Agni] fittingly with good hymns.
6. O watchful (Agni), protect these worlds,
   since you know the races of gods and of mortals.
7. Whom they will make grow through the many nights (and dawns) of differing forms—
   the one conceived by truth (whom) the moving and the still (will make grow),
8. He has been brought to success, installed as Hotar, as the sun,
   performing all the tasks to be realized.
9. You acquire a laud among the cows and the (fire)wood.
   All bear tribute to (you), our sun.
10. Men serve you separately in many places;
    they bear (you) away separately as (sons bear away) the property of their aging father.
11. Avid like (a horse) heading to the goal, like a champion archer,
    fearsome like a (chariot-)driver, dazzling in combats.

I.71 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The first of the Parāśara hymns in triṣṭubh, this is a curiously structured and very difficult hymn. It begins with a sexually suggestive verse describing the kindling of

the ritual fire by the fingers of the officiant manipulating the kindling sticks. Verse 2 switches to the mythic past and a fairly standard and straightforward summary of the role of the Aṅgirases in the opening of the Vala cave, but nothing in the hymn is straightforward after this. Verses treating the here-and-now of the ritual alternate with snippets of mythology.

The most dramatic mythological material is found discontinuously in verses 5 and 8, which treat the well-known if ill-understood story of the incest between Heaven and his daughter (see also X.61.5–7, as well as Jamison 1991: 288–301) and especially the punishment meted out to the offender by his avenger, who is clearly Agni. Since the birth of the Aṅgirases resulted from this incest, this myth fits both the dedicand of the hymn and the Aṅgiras verse (2) that follows the opening, and even the sexual innuendo of verse 1 may have evoked, or been evoked by, the incest theme.

The other mythological allusion is to Mātariśvan's stealing of fire (vs. 4); it is not clear whether this reference is meant to have any points of contact with the other mythological portions of the hymn. It does, however, connect with the theme of the interaction between gods and men, especially with Agni as go-between, found in verses 3, 4, and 7. Another puzzle is why Mitra and Varuṇa intrude into this Agni hymn in verse 9, though the appearance of the Sun in that same verse takes us back to verse 2. Ritual concerns are the focus of vss. 3, 6, and 7.

In short, in terms of structure this hymn neither follows a point-to-point trajectory nor displays an omphalos/ring-compositional shape. Instead it seems to show, at least in its central sections, sets of interlocking, overlapping paired verses—3 + 6, 4 + 7, 5 + 8—loosely nestled within a ring consisting of 2 + 9, and perhaps, more loosely still, 1 + 10.

1. The desirous females belonging to the same nest [=fingers] stimulate
   the desirous male [=Agni] close by—as wives of the same nest
   [=household] stimulate their own husband.
   The sisters [=fingers] have delighted in the dusky one and in the
   ruddy one [=two fire-kindling sticks], like cows in the brilliantly
   dawning dawn.
2. Even the firm fastnesses did our fathers, the Aṅgirases, break with their
   hymns, and the rock with their shout.
   They made the way of lofty heaven for us; they found the day and the
   sun, the beacon of the ruddy dawn.
3. They set the truth in place and they set the vision of it in motion; just
   after that the voracious (visions) of the stranger are dispersed.
   Never thirsting, (the [Aṅgirases'/poets'] visions), performing their tasks,
   go to the gods, strengthening their race with a pleasing offering.
4. When Mātariśvan, borne away, stole him, and he of worthy birth came to
   be gleaming in every house,

after that (the fire) of the Bhr̥gus undertook the role of messenger, as if for a more powerful king, being associated with him.

5. When he made the sap [=semen] for great Father Heaven, noting the caresses he stealthily crept up (on him).
   The archer boldly loosed a missile at him (when) the god placed his "spark" in his own daughter.
6. Who will radiate widely for you here in his own house, or through the days will piously offer reverence belonging to (you) who are eager for it—
   as the doubly lofty one, o Agni, you increase his vitality. He whom you speed will drive in the same chariot with Wealth.
7. All nourishments converge on Agni, like the seven youthful streams on the sea.
   Our vitality is not widely perceptible in the form of our kin. Perceiving (it [=vitality]), find solicitude (for us) among the gods.
8. When the (missile's) sharp point reached the lord of men [=Agni] (for him) to release it, Heaven, at the moment of contact, (released) the blazing semen poured out.
   Agni engendered the faultless young troop of good intention [=Aṅgirases] and sweetened it.
9. Who, like thought, travels his roads in a single day, the Sun alone is entirely master of goods,
   (as are) the kings Mitra and Varuṇa, they of good hands, who guard their own dear immortal thing [=milk?] within the cows.
10. Agni, do not neglect our ancestral partnerships, being preeminent as a wise poet.
    Old age alters our form like a cloud. Be attentive (to us) in the face of this curse.

I.72 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

Another hymn in which the overall structure and the relationships among the parts are unclear. The dominant myth here is the gods' search for and recovery of Agni, who had gone missing, and his (re)establishment as the ritual fire. This myth is treated in verses 2, 4, and 6 at least, and verses 3 and 5 are probably related as well. However, sorting out the narrative(s) is made difficult by the lack of overt subjects (as Geldner already pointed out) and by the number of injunctive verb forms, as well as some perfects that can have either presential or preterital value. These grammatical ambiguities allow much of the hymn to be

applicable simultaneously to the mythic past of the gods and the ritual present of men. Other mythic references include the dog Saramā's discovery and release of the penned-in cattle (vs. 8), thematically parallel to the discovery and recovery of Agni, and a puzzling reference to Aditi and her sons the Ādityas and the suckling of a bird (vs. 9).

What provides some unity to the hymn is less these unfinished scraps of mythical narrative than a focus on the vocabulary of knowledge and discovery: forms of the root *vid* "find, acquire, possess" and the homonymous root *vid* "know, discern," as well as the semantically related roots *jñā* "know, recognize" and *cit* "discern," are found, often multiply, in almost every verse. The hymn can thus be read as a sort of meta-reflection on the process of learning.

Another important feature of the hymn is the preoccupation with names and bodies, rather like the later category of "name-and-form" (*nāma-rūpa*). Proferes argues that verse 5 contains an early reflection of the Tānūnaptra rite, in which the sacrificer and the officiating priests at a soma sacrifice enter into a pact to be loyal to each other. The charter myth for this vow involves the gods all depositing their bodies in a common place (the sun, or Indra standing for the sun) to produce a common defense against external enemies. (See Proferes 2007: 59 for I.72.5 and 51–61 for the rite in general and its mythological background.) We agree with his analysis, but in fact think that the theme is more prominent in the hymn than in just that one verse. The central verses seem to suggest that the gods' quest for Agni and their discovery of him and his name (not overtly present, but formulaically suggested) in verse 2 and their ritual service to him in verse 3 allow them to acquire their own ritually worthy names and to make their own bodies also worthy of ritual service in verse 4. This leads to the mutual exchange and mutual possession of bodies in the Tānūnaptra verse proper (5). Thus rendered ritually worthy, they find within Agni the intricate and secret "tracks" of the ritual itself (vs. 6ab), a discovery that allows them to protect their own (6c), and that also leads to the beneficial actions of Agni in the world of men (6d, 7). More benefits follow in verses 8–9, though the connection of these to what precedes is admittedly hazy. The "deposit" in a central entity, here Agni, that is the heart of the Tānūnaptra pact seems to reappear in verse 10, in a context both cosmogonic (10b) and apparently ritual (10cd).

The depiction of Agni in this hymn as the locus for the joint deposit of the bodies of the gods in the Tānūnaptra myth is the mirror and complementary image of Agni Vaiśvānara, the fire "belonging to all men," around which all the allied human clans rally, in the earlier hymns of Parāśara Śāktya's Agni cycle (esp. I.68–70).

1. He outdoes the poetic skills of each and every ritual expert, taking in his
   hand many manly powers.
   Agni has become the wealth-lord of wealth, making wholly his own all
   immortal things.

2. Among us they did not find what was enclosing the calf [=Agni], though all the immortals—no fools—were seeking it.
   Taking pains, following the track, producing insight, they took their stand at the dear (name) of Agni, on the highest track.
3. Since, o Agni, for three autumns they [=gods?] served just you, the glowing one, with ghee—themselves glowing—
   they also acquired names worthy of worship and, well-born, they sweetened their own bodies.
4. Ever possessing the two lofty world-halves [/Rodasī], the sons of Rudra [=Maruts], worthy of worship, pressed forward.
   In the opposite position a mortal, perceiving him, found Agni standing on the highest track.
5. Coming to an agreement, they reverently approached him on bended knee; along with their wives, they did reverence to the one worthy of reverence.
   Having given up their bodies, they made (each other's bodies) their own, guarding them (as) a comrade does (that of) his comrade when he closes his eyes.
6. Since those worthy of worship found deposited just in you the three times seven secret tracks,
   with these do they, of one accord, guard their own immortal one. Protect the livestock, both the still and the moving.
7. Knowing the patterns of the settled peoples, o Agni, distribute proliferating riches in proper order (for them) to live.
   Inwardly knowing the roads leading to the gods, you have become the tireless messenger carrying the oblations.
8. Very attentive, (they discerned) the seven young maidens of heaven [=rivers]; knowing the truth, they discerned the doors of wealth.
   Saramā found the firmly fixed cattle-pen, by which, even now, the clan stemming from Manu benefits.
9. Those who mounted upon (those actions [=sacrifice]) that bring good descendants, making themselves a way toward immortality,
   by means of (those) sons, great in their greatness, the earth, their mother Aditi, spread out, in order to suckle the bird [=Agni? sun?].
10. They deposited (their?) own dear splendor within him, when the immortals made the two eyes of heaven [=sun and moon].
    Then like rivers sent surging they stream: heading downwards, the ruddy ones have recognized the way, o Agni.

I.73 Agni

Parāśara Śāktya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This last hymn of the Parāśara Agni cycle recapitulates some of the poetic devices and themes found in the earlier hymns and thus in some sense provides the close of a ring to the whole sequence. It begins with three verses dense with similes, recalling the first two hymns, I.65–66, which were similarly simile rich. The three verses are entirely descriptive of Agni, particularly of the sacrificial fire in its position on the ritual ground, but the god's name is not mentioned until verse 4, where he is kindled by men.

The rest of the hymn concerns Agni as the central focus of humans, of gods, and of ritual substances (for this last, see vs. 6), Agni as a distributor and redistributor of goods and services among gods, patrons, and poets, a role summed up in the word "portion" found in verses 5, 6, 7, and 10. This theme was announced in the first pāda of the hymn, and the "wealth acquired from one's father" of 1a recurs in verse 9.

Although this hymn lacks overt reference to the motifs of the Vaiśvānara fire and the Tānūnaptra rite, in which men and gods respectively become united by joint action involving the fire, the interrelations among men, among gods, and among men and gods depicted in this hymn recall the more explicit treatment of those motifs in earlier parts of the cycle. That both gods and men and, among men, both poets and patrons serve the fire in similar ways and seek similar rewards depicts these groups of beings as having a certain equality before Agni.

1. Who confers vitality like wealth acquired from one's father, providing good guidance like the instruction of a perceptive man,
resting in a comfortable place like a guest whose pleasure is served, like a Hotar he has traversed the (sacrificial) seat of him who does honor.
2. Whose thoughts become reality like god Savitar's, who protects all communities according to his will,
lauded by many like a (royal) emblem, really present and agreeable like one's own self, he has become desirable to install.
3. Who, suckling all, dwells peacefully upon the earth, like a god, like a king with established alliances,
stationed in front like heroes stationed for protection, irreproachable like a wife pleasing to her husband—
4. You, o Agni, kindled here in the house as their own, do men attend on in their fixed abodes.
They deposited abundant heavenly brilliance within him. Become the foundation of riches for your whole lifetime!

5. Might the bounteous ones reach nourishments, o Agni, and (might) the patrons who give (reach) through a whole lifetime.
   Might we gain the victory-prize in our clashes with the stranger, acquiring a portion among the gods for our fame.
6. For the bellowing cows of truth, apportioned by heaven, swell with their udders;
   from afar, seeking a portion of (your?) favor, the rivers have flowed forth all at once over the rock.
7. Seeking a portion of favor in you, those worthy of worship [=gods] set their fame in heaven.
   They made night and dawn of different forms, and they put together the black color and the red.
8. Might we—we and our patrons—be those mortals whom you will sweeten for wealth, o Agni.
   Like a shadow you accompany all creation, having filled the two world-halves and the space between.
9. Might we vanquish steeds with steeds, men with men, and heroes with heroes, o Agni, when aided by you.
   As lords of wealth acquired from their fathers, might our patrons, having a hundred winters, reach through (a whole lifetime).
10. Let these solemn speeches be pleasing to you, o Agni, ritual expert—to your mind and heart.
    Might we be able to control (the prizewinning horses) of your wealth, (so they are) amenable to the chariot-pole, while we acquire the fame apportioned by the gods.

The next, rather sizable group of twenty hymns is attributed to Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, who could be the father or other ancestor of the poet of I.58–64, Nodhas Gautama. If so, the dazzling skill of the son is not on view in the work of his father in the opening Agni hymns (74–79) or in the All God hymns (89–90), which seem more dutiful than engaged, but when he treats other gods, especially the Maruts (85–88) and Dawn (92), his poetry can be inspired.

I.74 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
9 verses: gāyatrī

The favor shown to the pious man by Agni is the theme of this short hymn. The beneficiary of Agni's patronage is identified as *dāśvā́ṃs* "pious" in verses 2, 8, and 9, and Agni's activities on his behalf are the subject of the middle verses 4–5. These

activities are mostly the familiar ones, of serving as messenger between the mortal and divine realms and going after the gods in order to bring them to the sacrifice (see esp. vss. 4, 6–7), but Agni is also credited with aiding the pious man under attack (vs. 2), leading to the god's covert identification with Indra, via the epithet "Vṛtra-smasher" (vs. 3). Another unusual feature of this hymn is the appeal to what "the people say" about Agni and his devotee (vss. 3, 5).

1. Reverently approaching the ceremony, might we speak a solemn formula to Agni,
   to him who listens, (when he is) in the distance and with us (here),
2. Who, at the forefront in the "blizzards" (of attacks) when the separate peoples were clashing together,
   guarded for the pious man his patrimony.
3. And let the people say: "Agni, the Vṛtra-smasher, has arisen,
   who wins the stakes in every battle!"
4. The man whose messenger you are in the dwelling place, for whom you pursue (the gods) to pursue the oblations,
   whose ceremony you perform wondrously—
5. Just he has good oblations, has the gods with him, o Aṅgiras, young (son) of strength,
   has a good ritual grass-strew—so the people say.
6. And you will convey the gods here for their glorification,
   (for them) to pursue the oblations, o much gleaming one.
7. No trampling of horses is heard at all from your chariot as it drives,
   when, o Agni, you travel on your mission.
8. Aided by you, the competitor, unabashed (even though he was) behind the one in front,
   the pious man, has taken first place, o Agni.
9. And a brilliant, lofty abundance of heroes, Agni, do you strive to win
   from the gods, o god, for the pious man.

I.75 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
5 verses: gāyatrī

This short hymn begins (vs. 1) by urging Agni to enjoy our praise of him, which the poet hopes will be "a winning sacred formulation" (vs. 2). But, contravening our expectations, in place of this promised *bráhman* the poet instead asks a series of abrupt questions in verse 3. Then once again our expectations are disappointed, for although verse 4 at first appears to contain the answers to the questions posed in verse 3, only the first question is actually answered, while the rest of verse 4, though

maintaining the clausal structure of verse 3, is only vaguely related in meaning to the corresponding clauses in verse 3. The hymn ends (vs. 5) with a conventional directive to Agni to perform sacrifice, with its imperative matching the imperative beginning the hymn ("take delight," 1a).

Although the hymn is too brief to develop the theme of thwarted expectations sketched above, it does uninsistently suggest that verbal *form* may trump content in the construction of praise poetry and that the audience should be wary of being led astray by a poet's expressed intentions.

1. Take delight in the most extensive speech, which affords most delight to
   the gods,
   while pouring the oblations into your own mouth.
2. Then, o Agni, best of Aṅgirases, best of ritual adepts, something
   dear to you
   might we speak—a winning sacred formulation.
3. Who is the kinsman of your peoples? O Agni, who holds the pious
   ceremony?
   Who are you and fixed in what?
4. You are the kinsman of the peoples. O Agni, you are the dear envoy,
   a comrade for your comrades, to be reverently invoked.
5. Sacrifice for us to Mitra and Varuṇa; sacrifice to the gods, to lofty truth.
   Agni, you will sacrifice to your own home.

I.76 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with anxious questions about how best to worship Agni in order to harness his powers. The structure of this question verse is reminiscent of verse 3 of the previous hymn (I.75), with each pāda containing a separate query; however, the questions here are more focused on how best to please Agni, and the longer line of triṣṭubh meter makes the questions seem less abrupt than in the gāyatrī of I.75.3. As in I.75 the questions here do not receive explicit answers. Instead the poet devotes most of the rest of the hymn to detailing Agni's duties and seeking Agni's aid as ritual performer and priest (see esp. vss. 2, 4), to bring the gods, especially Indra (see vs. 3c), to the ritual ground and to sacrifice to them.

1. What reverent approach is to your heart's desire? What inspired thought
   will be the most beneficial, Agni?
   Or, who attains your skill through his sacrifices? Or, with what mind
   should we piously serve you?

2. Come hither, Agni; sit down here as Hotar. Become an undeceivable leader for us.
   Let the two world-halves, which set everything in motion, aid you. Sacrifice to the gods for great benevolence.
3. Burn away all demonic beings, Agni. Become for the sacrifices the protector from curses.
   Then convey here the lord of soma with his two fallow bays. We have made a guest reception for him who gives well.
4. With a speech bringing offspring you are to be invoked as the conveyor (of oblations) with your mouth, and you will sit down here with the gods.
   You pursue the Hotarship and the Potarship, you instrument of sacrifice. Become (all this), o provider and engenderer of goods.
5. Just as you sacrificed to the gods with the oblations of the inspired poet Manu, along with the poets, yourself a poet,
   even so, o Hotar most truly present, o Agni, today perform sacrifice with your gladdening tongue.

I.77 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is in some ways a twin to the last one: both have five triṣṭubh verses, and both open with a verse of questions about the proper way to serve Agni, using some of the same vocabulary (e.g., *dāśema* "we should piously serve" I.77.1a and I.76.1d). Lexical similarities continue through the hymn: *śáṃtama* "most beneficial" (77.2a, 76.1b), various forms of the verb √*vī* "pursue" (77.2c, 4b; 76.4c), et cetera. Like I.76, this hymn also focuses on Agni's role as priest and sacrificer, although the rhetoric in this hymn is somewhat more expansive than in I.76.

1. How should we do pious service to Agni? Which hymn enjoyable to the gods is spoken to him, the radiant—
   the one who, the immortal among mortals, the truthful Hotar, as the best sacrificer just does so [=sacrifices] to the gods?
2. The one who is the most beneficial at the ceremonies, the truthful Hotar—attract him here with reverence.
   When Agni, for the sake of the mortal, has pursued the gods all together, he will be attentive to them and will perform sacrifice with his mind.
3. For he is resolve; he is a young buck; he is on target. Like an envoy he has become charioteer of the unerring.

Him, the wondrous one, do the god-seeking Ārya clans entreat first at the ritual offerings.

4. He, most manly of men, who has care for the stranger—let Agni with his help pursue our hymns, our visionary thought—for us
and for our benefactors, the strongest ones, motivated by prizes, who propel our prayers at length.

5. Thus has Agni, the truthful one, the Jātavedas, been praised by the Gotamas, inspired poets.
He will swell brilliance among them; he will swell the prize. He drives to prosperity at his pleasure—the observant one.

I.78 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
5 verses: gāyatrī

A hymn of uninspired content, which is rigidly structured and dominated by its refrain. Its most noteworthy feature is that the first two pādas of the last verse (5) break the pattern of the preceding ones, and it is here that the name Agni appears for the first and only time in the hymn, with the reference switched from the 2nd person of the rest of the hymn to 3rd person in its final verse. It is also striking that in verses 1 and 4 the refrain is syntactically integral to the verse, with the initial "to you" the object of the verb in the third-pāda refrain, whereas in the middle verses 2–3 the refrain is syntactically separate, and the initial "to you" is construed with the verb in the first hemistich. Thus, its formal properties are the whole point of the hymn, with meaning essentially backgrounded. For discussion of other ways in which Gotama privileges form over content, see the introduction to I.75.

1. To you, o boundless Jātavedas, with a hymn do we Gotamas
keep bellowing, with éclat.

2. And to you with a hymn does Gotama, desirous of wealth, show friendship.
– We keep bellowing to (you), with éclat.

3. And to you, best winner of prizes, do we call, as Aṅgiras did.
– We keep bellowing to (you), with éclat.

4. And to you, best smasher of obstacles, who send the Dasyus tumbling down,
we keep bellowing, with éclat.

5. We Rahūgaṇas have spoken a honeyed speech to Agni.
– We keep bellowing to (him), with éclat.

I.79 Agni

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
12 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, uṣṇih 4–6, gāyatrī 7–12

As its position in the sequence and its metrical disunity suggest, this hymn actually consists of four separate hymns of three verses each (1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12). The last three are relatively simple in their construction and their contents, but the first is rich and vividly descriptive and poses some problems of interpretation.

This first hymn segment begins (vs. 1) with quick sketches of different forms of fire: fire as sun (pāda a); fire as lightning (pāda b); ritual fire, especially as it is kindled at dawn (pādas cd). This verse manages to convey dynamism without the use of a single finite verb or participle. The next two verses (2–3) take up the second image, fire as lightning, and develop it in unexpected ways. In our reading, the ritual fire (that is, the god Agni) is compared with and ultimately identified with the thunderstorm, and therefore its product, the fructifying rain, can be presented, paradoxically, as the product of fire itself, a substance that in nature cannot produce water. In verse 2 the zigzagging lightning flashes are the fire's flames; the bellowing bull is the roaring fire itself, and the flying mists and thundering clouds are the billowing smoke. Verse 3 takes this naturalistic comparison to its logical but unnatural conclusion: if fire is the embodiment of the thunderstorm, then it is full of rain, a most desirable product, here called "the milk of truth." In the last half of this verse the principal Ādityas as well as Wind become involved by engorging the clouds with water.

After this complex and allusive vignette, the other three hymn segments are a serious anticlimax. In verses 4–6 Agni is asked to give wealth and fame and to protect against demons. Wealth is also the preoccupation of verses 7–9. In the final three verses the poet, Gotama, exhorts himself to give hymns to Agni, and then implores Agni to keep demons away. There is nothing in these nine verses to arrest the attention, but Gotama's first three verses are indeed a worthy gift for the god.

1. A golden-haired one in his spread through the dusky realm—a snake, tumultuous, swooping like the wind—
   blazing bright (when he becomes) cognizant of Dawn, like the glorious busy (Dawns themselves) actually present.
2. Your fine-feathered (lightning flashes) zigzagged along their ways. The black bull keeps bellowing. If he is really here,
   he has come here with his (lightning flashes) like kindly, smiling (girls). The mists fly; the clouds thunder.
3. When he, swollen with the milk of truth, (has come) leading them [=the lightning flashes] along the straightest paths of truth—
   Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, and the Earth-circling (Wind) engorge the skin in the womb of the nearer (realm).

4. O Agni, being the lord of the prize consisting of cows, o youthful (son) of strength,
   on us confer great fame, o Jātavedas.
5. On being kindled, Agni the good poet is to be reverently invoked with a hymn.
   Shine richly for us, you of many faces.
6. Through the nights in your own person, King Agni, and at the dawning of dawn,
   o sharp-fanged one, burn against the demons.

7. Help us, Agni, with your help at the presentation of the gāyatrī song,
   o you to be extolled in all hymnic visions.
8. Bring here to us wealth, o Agni, which is victorious in every way, worthy to be chosen,
   and difficult to surpass in all battles.
9. (Bring) here to us wealth affording lifelong prosperity with your kind attention, o Agni.
   Confer grace, (for us) to live.

10. Present your own purified speeches to sharp-flamed Agni, o Gotama;
    present your own hymns, as you seek his favor.
11. Whoever will assail us, close by or in the distance, let him fall, o Agni.
    Be (ready) to strengthen only us.
12. Thousand-eyed, boundless Agni repels the demonic forces.
    As Hotar, worthy of praise, he is hymned.

I.80 Indra

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
16 verses: paṅkti

Like the justly famous I.32, this hymn is entirely concerned with the Indra–Vr̥tra battle. It portrays Indra's defeat of Vr̥tra and his release of the pent-up waters with admirable clarity, though it lacks the richness of detail of I.32 and the intimacy of the portrait of the overmatched and then defeated Vr̥tra found in that other hymn. Instead this hymn simply keeps repeating the climactic moment when Indra smote Vr̥tra with his mace (*vájra*). In fact, the mace seems almost as much the hero of the hymn as Indra is: in the first thirteen verses, those concerned most directly with the Vr̥tra battle, only three (4, 9, 10) lack a mention of the mace. Verse 8 is especially noteworthy in containing the only occurrence of plural *vájra* in the R̥gveda, in a puzzling context: "Your maces have been dispersed across the ninety navigable (rivers)." This passage superficially reminds us of I.32.14, in which Indra, having slain Vr̥tra, flees in fear across "the ninety-nine

flowing rivers," but the implications of our passage seem more positive. Perhaps the point is that, once the rivers were released to flow in all directions, Indra's power, embodied in the mace, was subdivided and spread across the whole fertile, water-fed landscape.

The fifth-pāda refrain in every verse is an especially salient feature of the hymn and concerns the verbal encouragement given to Indra. The subject of the plural verb *árcann ánu* is never specified, and since the verb is in the injunctive, it is ambiguous between present and indefinite mythic past. These uncertainties are no doubt deliberate: the subject can be the current poet-sacrificers, their legendary counterparts (Atharvan, Manu, and Dadhyañc mentioned in vs. 16), or the Maruts, the gods who in mythic time provided encouragement to Indra before and during the Vr̥tra combat. A direct-speech example of such encouragement is given in verse 3, and verse 9 encourages the encouragers in this action. The relationship between the current poets and their predecessors is built into the structure of the hymn, in a telling ring between the first and last verses. Verse 1 mentions the formulation created "in the current style" (*itthā́*), while in verse 16 formulations made "in the older style" (*pūrváthā*), imitating illustrious named past poets and sacrificers, are offered to Indra. Thus the hymn implicitly suggests that not only was Indra's great victory impossible without his cheering comrades, but that poets today, like those in the past, fulfill the same role.

1. Because right at the time of the soma exhilaration the formulator created
 a strengthening (formulation) in the current style,
 o strongest mace-bearer, with your might you ordered the serpent forth
 from the earth.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
2. The bullish exhilaration exhilarated you—the soma, brought here by a
 falcon, then pressed,
 with which you smashed Vr̥tra forth from the waters, o mace-bearer, with
 your might.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
3. "Go forth! Go to it! Dare! Your mace will not be restrained,
 for, Indra, manly power and strength are yours. You will smash Vr̥tra;
 you will conquer the waters."
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
4. Forth from the earth you smashed Vr̥tra, o Indra, forth from heaven.
 Release downward these waters, which are accompanied by the Maruts,
 affording riches to the living.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
5. Indra, angered, having attacked the back of raging Vr̥tra with his mace,
 keeps smashing him downward, spurring the waters to flow.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.

6. He keeps smashing down on his back with the hundred-jointed mace.
 Indra, exhilarated from the stalk, seeks a way for his comrades.
 – They cheer on his sovereign power.
7. O Indra, possessor of the stone, of the mace, to you alone virile power was conceded.
 When (you kept smashing) this wild beast of magic power, you slew him with your own magic power.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
8. Your maces have been dispersed across the ninety navigable (rivers).
 Great is your virile power, Indra; force has been placed in your two arms.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
9. Thousand(-strong), do you chant as one. Twenty(-strong), encircle him with rhythm.
 In the hundreds they have bellowed after him. To Indra has the sacred formulation been raised.
 – They cheer on his sovereign power.
10. Indra has smashed forth the power of Vr̥tra, has smashed forth the might of Vr̥tra with his might.
 Great was this manly deed of his: having smashed Vr̥tra, he released (the waters).
 – They cheer on his sovereign power.
11. Even these two great (world-halves) here tremble with fear before your battle-fury,
 since, mace-bearing Indra, you have slain Vr̥tra with might, with the Maruts alongside.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
12. Not by his trembling excitation, not by his thundering did Vr̥tra make Indra fear.
 His mace of metal with a thousand spikes confronted him.
 – They cheer on his sovereign power.
13. When with your mace you set Vr̥tra and your missile to fighting,
 o Indra, your strength, as you sought to smash the serpent, kept pressing toward heaven.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
14. At your thundering, o possessor of the stone, both the still and the moving shake.
 Even Tvaṣṭar quivers with fear before your battle-fury, Indra.
 – They cheer on your sovereign power.
15. For, from what we can learn, no one is beyond Indra in virile power.
 In him have the gods assembled manliness and resolve and mighty powers.
 – They cheer on his sovereign power.

16. The poetic vision which Atharvan, Manu the father, and Dadhyañc extended—
our sacred formulations and hymns in this older style have come together in him, in Indra.
– They cheer on his sovereign power.

I.81 Indra

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
9 verses: paṅkti

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one is in paṅkti meter, but here the fifth pāda, rather than being a refrain, is variable and in one instance (vs. 4) syntactically connected to what precedes it in the verse. (Otherwise the fifth pāda is syntactically independent but linked thematically.)

The strength and power of Indra are the main theme, but it is clear that for the poet the purpose of Indra's might is simply to enable him to provide his worshipers with goods (vss. 2–3, 6–9)—particularly those goods belonging to "the stranger" (vss. 6, 9), in this case probably a non-sacrificing member of the Ārya community, which Indra should redistribute to more deserving men. The demands for largesse become increasingly peremptory, and the quantity of praise given to Indra is rather limited. One wonders how much success this bid for riches would have met with.

1. Indra has been strengthened for exhilaration, the Vr̥tra-smasher for strength, by superior men.
Just him do we invoke in great contests, and him in a petty one;
when prizes (are set) he will help us.
2. For you are the martial one, hero; you are the one who hands over much.
You are the increaser even of the paltry. You exert yourself for the sacrificer;
for the soma-presser your goods are many.
3. When contests loom, rich stakes are set for the daring one.
Hitch up your two fallow bays, aroused to exuberance. Whom will you smash? Whom will you set in goods?
It's us you will set in goods, Indra.
4. Through his resolve the great, fearsome one has increased his strength in accord with his own nature.
For splendor the lofty belipped possessor of fallow bays has taken
the metal mace into his own clasped hands.
5. He filled the earthly space; he kept thrusting the luminous realms toward heaven.
There is no one like you, Indra, who has been born or will be born.
You have grown beyond everything.

6. He who hands over to the pious man the sustenance for mortals that belongs to the stranger—
   let Indra do his best for us. Share out your many goods:
   might I have a share of your generosity.
7. For at every revel (you) of straight resolve give us herds of cattle.
   Gather together many hundreds of goods with both hands.
   Look sharp!—bring riches here.
8. Become exhilarated on the pressed soma, for strength, o champion, for generosity.
   Because we know you as possessing many goods, we have dispatched our desires to you—
   so become our helper.
9. These (people who are) kin to you [=us] foster everything of value.
   Because you detect the possessions of the stranger, of the impious peoples,
   bring their possessions here to us.

I.82 Indra

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: paṅkti, except jagatī 6

Like the three Indra hymns (I.61–63) of our poet's descendant, Nodhas Gautama, this hymn was composed to accompany the "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation at the end of the soma sacrifice, at which the two horses of Indra are hitched up for the return journey to heaven. The first five verses are in paṅkti meter, with the fifth pāda a refrain announcing the sacrificer's intention to perform this yoking. In the body of those verses the poet announces that the goal of the sacrifice has been achieved (vss. 1–2): both Indra and his companions the Maruts have received praise and oblations, and they have provided presents in return. He offers Indra a last bit of praise and a last oblation to send him on his way (vss. 3–4), and then turns to the actual yoking of the pair of horses (vs. 5).

The final verse is in a different meter and expresses the act of yoking in a different tense and mood. The subtle distinction in wording between the refrain of verses 1–5 and its variant in the first pāda of the final verse (6a) is significant: the refrain contains the 1st sg. root aorist subjunctive *yójā* in the prospective/volitional sense "I will yoke," while the version in the final verse transposes the formula into the present indicative with *yunájmi*, and adds the instrumental *bráhmaṇā* "with a sacred formulation." These changes make the statement into a "performative" in the technical linguistic sense; that is, the utterance by itself performs the action it expresses: "I (hereby) yoke your two shaggy fallow bays with a solemn formulation." The *bráhman* refers to the entire hymn that

precedes, and it is the very recitation of the hymn, identified as a *bráhman*, that performs the ritual act of yoking.

A particularly appealing part of the hymn is the mention of Indra's wife in verses 5–6: the poet is concerned to send the god directly back home to his "dear wife" and further exhilaration. See also III.53.4–6.

1. Listen well to our hymns, bounteous one, not like a nay-sayer.
   When you will make us the beneficiaries of your liberality, it's just then that you will achieve your goal.
   – Now, Indra, I will hitch up your two fallow bays.
2. They have eaten; for they have brought themselves to exhilaration; they have shaken down dear things.
   They have been praised—the self-radiant (Maruts)—with the newest inspired thought.
   – Now, Indra, I will hitch up your two fallow bays.
3. We would extol you of wholly lovely appearance, o bounteous one.
   Praised, drive forth now following your will, once your chariot box is full.
   – Now, Indra, I will hitch up your two fallow bays.
4. The only one who will mount on the bullish, cow-finding chariot
   is the one who will take care that the cup is full for your "Fallow-bay-yoking" oblation, Indra.
   – Now, Indra, I will hitch up your two fallow bays.
5. Let your right (horse) be yoked, and your left one, you of a hundred resolves.
   With this (chariot) drive up to your dear wife, while (you are still) exhilarated from the stalk.
   – Now, Indra, I will hitch up your two fallow bays.
6. With (this) sacred formulation I (hereby) hitch up your two shaggy fallow bays. Drive forth; you have taken (the reins? the mace?) in your fists.
   The wild pressed soma-drinks have stirred you up. Accompanied by Pūṣan, o mace-bearer, you will become exhilarated along with your wife.

I.83 Indra

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: jagatī

In this hymn the poet uses two different senses of the word "first" to imbue the good sacrificer with the qualities and prestige of the legendary institutors of the

sacrifice. At the beginning of verse 1 the good sacrificer is "the first" to attain to wealth provided by Indra. The next two verses continue the characterization of the good sacrificer and the good life bestowed on him by the gods. The next two verses (4–5) pick up the word "first" (*prathamá*) that opened the hymn, but here not in the sense of "foremost, first in line" as in verse 1, but rather "primal, original": these verses concern the first establishment of the sacrifice and the actions of the famous primordial sacrificers. In the final verse (6) we return to the current sacrifice, but by putting the model of the original sacrificers before us, the poet implies that the present-day sacrificer is replicating their actions and is identified with them. This is one of the common themes of R̥gvedic sacrifice: that each new sacrifice is an enactment of the first one.

1. The first to come to (wealth) consisting of horses, to cows with
   your help, o Indra, is the mortal who pursues (his ritual duties)
   well.
   Just him do you engorge with more abundant goods, as waters,
   conspicuous from everywhere, engorge a river.
2. Like the goddesses, the Waters, they [=gods] approach (the
   place) associated with oblation; they look downward onto
   the extended (soma-filter? sacrifice?) as if onto an extensive
   airy realm.
   The gods lead forward the one who seeks the gods. Like suitors,
   they delight in the man who pleases (them) with the sacred
   formulation.
3. You have placed a speech worthy to be spoken in the two (priests), the
   pair who ritually serve with their offering spoons extended.
   Not mustered (to battle), he dwells in peace under your commandment,
   he thrives. Propitious is your potency for the sacrificer who
   presses soma.
4. The Aṅgirases, who had (previously) kindled the fires with ritual
   labor and good ritual performance, after that first acquired their
   life-force.
   They collected together all the sustenance of the niggard, livestock
   consisting of horses and cows—the superior men.
5. With sacrifices the Atharvan first stretched the paths. Thereupon was the
   Sun, the protector of commandments, the tracker, born.
   Uśanā Kāvya drove the cows together. We sacrifice to the immortal birth
   of Yama.
6. When the ritual grass is twisted for the sake of good descendants, or the
   chant sounds its signal-call toward heaven,
   when the pressing stone, the praiseworthy bard speaks, just at his
   (sacrifice) does Indra take pleasure at suppertime.

I.84 Indra

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
20 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–6, uṣṇih 7–9, paṅkti 10–12, gāyatrī 13–15, triṣṭubh 16–18, bṛhatī 19, satobṛhatī 20; arranged in tṛcas 1–18, pragātha 19–20

Coming at the end of Gotama's Indra collection, this long and metrically complex hymn must actually be composed of smaller hymn segments. The first eighteen verses are arranged in tṛcas, and it ends with a single pragātha. The contents range from the most banal invitation to the sacrifice to elusive and allusive treatments of little-known myths. There are a number of reminiscences of the Indra hymns preceding it in the Gotama collection.

The first six verses, in anuṣṭubh meter, appear to form a unity, urging Indra to come to the soma sacrifice in clichéd and predictable phraseology. The next tṛca (vss. 7–9) is in uṣṇih meter (8 8 12); the last four syllables of the third pāda are a semidetached refrain ("Indra indeed!"), so that the verses present themselves like gāyatrī (i.e., 8 8 8). The contrast between the good sacrificer and his unsatisfactory counterpart is the theme.

The next tṛca (vss. 10–12), in paṅkti meter, is highly reminiscent of I.80, also in paṅkti. As in that hymn the fifth pāda of each verse is a refrain syntactically unconnected to the rest of the verse. In fact, the last six syllables of the refrain match those of I.80, and in order to make sense of the refrain here, we must supply the verb ("they cheer on") from the refrain of I.80. This tṛca concerns the mixing of milk with the pressed soma, in metaphorical terms—with the milk streams depicted as buffalo-cows. Beneath this first metaphor there may be a second: it is possible that the Maruts lurk behind the buffalo-cow facade. (Remember that the Maruts were one of the possible subjects of the refrain in I.80.) An association of the Maruts with "the ritual midpoint" here might allude to their recent incorporation as recipients of the oblation at the Midday Pressing.

Another reminiscence of I.80 is found in the next tṛca (vss. 13–15), in gāyatrī, which treats in most condensed and puzzling fashion the myth of Dadhyañc and the horse's head. (For this myth in general, see Macdonell 1897: 141–42.) Dadhyañc and his father Atharvan were mentioned in passing in the last verse of I.80 (vs. 16). In other versions of the myth Dadhyañc substitutes a horse's head for his own in order to declare the secret location of Tvaṣṭar's soma. In these three short verses we find Dadhyañc, the horse's head, and Tvaṣṭar, but the narrative in which they are involved is entirely unclear and we confess ourselves mystified.

The last tṛca (vss. 16–18) consists entirely of anxious questions, mostly in connection with the sacrifice, reminiscent of the cascade of questions in other Gotama hymns (I.75.3, 76.1, 77.1). The first verse (16) wonders who will be able to yoke particularly ill-behaved cattle and bring them here. "Here" seems to refer to the sacrifice, and the best guess as to the identity of the cattle is the Maruts, who are the dedicands of Gotama's next four hymns (I.85–88). The next verse (17) is more confused, but the location of Indra and indeed his very existence are in question, and a formal spokesman on behalf of mortals is sought. The questions are more

clearly ritual in verse 18, ending with the sacrificer's self-doubt about his status with the gods he sacrifices to. The final two verses (19–20), an independent pragātha, seem designed to quell this doubt, asserting that Indra himself, in a turn-about, will praise the sacrificer and show him mercy, as well as offering him help and goods.

Although no strong unity among the various pieces of this hymn is perceptible, it does mimic in certain ways the progress of a soma sacrifice. It opens with the invitation (vss. 1–6), made more pointed by the contrast between our well-made and deserving sacrifice and the behavior of ungenerous mortals (vss. 7–9). Verses 10–12 concern the actual preparation of the soma (and also refer, in vs. 7, to the ritual midpoint). Verses 13–15 can be seen as a mythic interlude, praising the great deeds of Indra while he is present on the ritual ground. Verses 16–18 raise doubts about the efficacy of the sacrifice that has been, or is being, performed—doubts somewhat allayed by the final two verses (19–20), which end with the usual requests for benefits from the god.

1. The soma has been pressed for you, Indra. O strongest bold one,
   come here.
   Let Indrian strength permeate you, as the sun permeates the airy realm
   with its rays.
2. The two fallow bays convey Indra of irresistible strength
   up to the praises of the seers and to the sacrifice of the sons of Manu.
3. Mount the chariot, Vr̥tra-smasher: your two fallow bays have been
   yoked with a sacred formulation.
   Let the pressing stone with its call make your mind inclined hither.

4. Drink this soma here, Indra, the preeminent immortal exhilaration.
   The streams of the clear (soma) have flowed to you in the seat of truth.
5. Chant now to Indra and speak solemn words.
   The pressed drops have exhilarated him. Do homage to (his)
   preeminent might.
6. No one is a better charioteer than you, Indra, when you control your
   two fallow bays.
   No one has reached you in greatness, not (even) one with good horses.

7. He who alone apportions the goods to the pious mortal,
   the unrepulsable master – (that's) Indra indeed!
8. When will he kick the ungenerous mortal with his foot like a mushroom?
   When will he listen to our hymns? – Indra indeed!
9. For someone who has pressed soma seeks to entice you here, away from
   the many.
   He has control of powerful strength – Indra indeed!

10. The buffalo-cows drink just so of the sweet honey belonging to the
    (ritual) midpoint,
    they who, fellow travelers with bullish Indra, become exhilarated for
    beauty—
    – The good ones (cheer) on his sovereignty.

11. These dappled ones, eager for caresses, prepare the soma for him.
 The milk-cows dear to Indra propel his mace, his missile.
 – The good ones (cheer) on his sovereignty.
12. They, forethoughtful, serve his might with reverence.
 They follow his many commandments, to be first in his thought.
 – The good ones (cheer) on his sovereignty.

13. With the bones of Dadhyañc unrepulsable Indra
 smashed the nine and ninety obstacles.
14. The head of the horse that he was seeking set away in the mountains,
 that he found in the reed-filled (lake?).
15. Right there they thought of the secret name of the cow of Tvaṣṭar—
 likewise in the house of the moon.

16. Who today yokes the cattle to the chariot-pole of truth—the vehement, wrathful, very angry ones,
 with arrows in their mouths, shooting at the heart, but embodying joy? Whoever will succeed in bringing them, he will live.
17. Who retreats and who is thrust back? Who is fearful? Who might think Indra exists? Who (might think he is) nearby?
 Who will speak for offspring, who for a retinue and for wealth? Who will speak on behalf of himself, on behalf of his people?
18. Who reverently invokes Agni with oblation and ghee? (Who) will perform sacrifice with a ladle according to the fixed ritual sequences?
 For whom will the gods swiftly convey the offering here? Who might think himself a man whose oblations are worth pursuing, who has gods well on his side?

19. Surely you, (though) a god, will solemnly praise the mortal, o strongest one.
 There is no other dispenser of mercy than you, bounteous one. Indra, I say this speech to you:
20. Let not your benefits, nor your help, good one, ever cheat us.
 And mete out to us all goods coming from the settled domains, you who belong to the descendants of Manu.

I.85 Maruts

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5, 12

A typical Marut hymn: their beauty and their adornments, their unruly journey to the sacrifice and the thunderstorm it represents, their parentage (Rudra as father,

Pr̥śni the cow as mother), their fearsome power. One stylistic peculiarity is the tendency to repeat with minimal variation parts of one verse in the next, an example of concatenative repetition; see 2c/3ab; 4cd/5a; 6c/7b, d; 10a/11a.

Although the focus throughout is firmly on the Maruts, there is one seemingly intrusive verse (9), where the Maruts are unmentioned and mythologically irrelevant, in which Tvaṣṭar fashions the mace for Indra to slay Vr̥tra. Indra's release of the waters after the slaying must be the point of contact, since the next two verses (10–11) concern the Maruts' tipping the heavenly well to pour out its water.

1. Those who go forth in beauty like wives, spanned together on their journey, the sons of Rudra, possessing wondrous power—
for the Maruts made the two world-halves grow strong—the heroes reach exhilaration, eager at the rites.
2. Once grown, they attained greatness: the Rudras made their seat in heaven.
Chanting their chant, generating Indra's strength, they whose mother is Pr̥śni put on their splendors.
3. When those whose mother is a cow beautify themselves with unguents, the beautiful ones put radiant (ornaments) on their bodies.
They thrust away every antagonist. Ghee flows along their tracks.
4. Those good battlers who flash out with their spears, stirring forth even the unstirrable by their power—
When, o Maruts, in a bullish troop you have yoked the mind-swift dappled mares to your chariots,
5. When you have yoked the dappled mares to your chariots, speeding the stone at the prize-contest, o Maruts—
they unloose the streams of the ruddy one and inundate the earth with waters like a skin.
6. Let the quick-streaming spans convey you hither; quickly flying with your arms, go forth.
Sit on the ritual grass: a broad seat has been made for you. Make yourselves exhilarated, Maruts, on the honeyed stalk.
7. Those self-powerful ones strengthened themselves in their greatness. They mounted the vault; they made themselves a broad seat.
When Viṣṇu rinsed the bull [=soma] arousing exhilaration,
[and/or] When Viṣṇu aided the bull [=Indra], stirred by the exhilarating drink,
they settled like birds on the dear ritual grass.
8. Like champions, like oncoming fighters, like those seeking fame in battles, they have marshaled themselves.
All creatures fear the Maruts—the superior men glittering in appearance like kings.
9. When Tvaṣṭar the good craftsman had turned the well-made golden mace with its thousand spikes,

Indra took it to do the manly works: he smashed Vṛtra, he forced out the flood of waters.

10. They pushed the well upward with their power; they split apart the mountain, though it was firmly fixed.
    Blowing their music, the Maruts of good drops performed these joyous (deeds) in the exhilaration of soma.
11. They pushed the well aslant in this way. They poured out the wellspring for the thirsting Gotama.
    They come hither to him with help—they of bright radiance. They satisfy the desire of the inspired poet through their own essential qualities.
12. The shelters you have for the one who performs ritual labor—hold these out threefold to the pious man.
    Extend these to us, Maruts; establish for us wealth in good heroes, o bulls.

I.86 Maruts

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
10 verses: gāyatrī

The first half of this hymn has a remarkably intricate syntactic structure, especially for a gāyatrī hymn. Verse 1 makes the outlines of this structure clear: a genitive relative pronoun (*yásya* "whose, of whom") introducing a clause in which the Maruts perform some service for the man so identified, with a main clause expressing the rewards this man receives. (Roughly paraphrased, in vs. 1 "whose dwelling you protect, he has the best protector.") With this structure set, the poet feels free to attenuate and manipulate it. In our view, verses 2 and 3 are examples of this same structure, but the *yásya* has been gapped in verse 2 and must be supplied from verse 1, along with a verb for 2a. Moreover, the main clause expressing the reward is postponed until verse 3c, and there are three different relative clauses that it completes (2a, 2bc, 3ab). The repeated *vā́*'s ("or") allow this submerged structure to be discerned, despite the gapping. The three clauses define three different beneficiaries of the Maruts' favor: the sacrificer (2a), the poet himself (2bc), or the poet's patron ("prize-seeker" 3ab).

Verses 4–5 continue the fronted genitive pattern, but now with a demonstrative pronoun, not a relative. The referent is still the Maruts' client, and his success becomes magnified in these verses; not only is his sacrifice a success (vs. 4), but he subjugates the surrounding peoples, and his sacrificial offerings go all the way to heaven (vs. 5).

Verse 6 abruptly switches to the 1st plural from the 3rd singular: it's *we* who have been performing all this sacrificial labor, and the poet implicitly identifies

us with the anonymous hard-working and well-rewarded man of the first five verses. The 3rd sg. sacrificer returns in verses 7–8, with the syntactic structure switched: the main clause and happy reward precede the relative *yásya* clause (see esp. vs. 7). The last two verses call on the Maruts for their help, especially against aggressors.

Gotama's penchant for elaborate and varied syntactic patterning has been noted previously in the introductions to several of his hymns.

1. O Maruts of extensive might, certainly the man over whose dwelling
   place you keep protective watch from heaven,
   he has the best protector.
2. Or he by whose sacrifices (you were attracted), o you whose vehicle is
   the sacrifice, or of the thoughts of which inspired poet
   you heard the call, o Maruts—
3. Or for which prize-seeker you fashioned an inspired poet to follow,
   he will go to a pen full of cattle.
4. Of that hero here the soma has been pressed at the rituals of day(break)
   on his ritual grass;
   his solemn speech and exhilarating drink are being announced.
5. To him let the beings listen attentively, to him who dominates all the
   separate peoples.
   His are the refreshing drinks that have run even to the sun.
6. For through many autumns we have done pious work, o Maruts,
   with the help of the separate peoples.
7. O Maruts who receive the first of the sacrifice, let that mortal be
   well-portioned
   whose pleasurable offerings you will guide.
8. You superior men whose strength is real, you know the sweat of the one
   laboring to exhaustion,
   or the desire of the one who seeks the (ritual) track.
9. You whose strength is real—make it [=strength] manifest by your
   greatness.
   Smite the demon with your lightning.
10. Conceal the concealable darkness. Run over every rapacious one.
    Make the light that we desire.

I.87 Maruts

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: jagatī

The gleeful density of descriptive adjectives in verse 1 opens this hymn with a bang. It is only in the final pāda of this first verse that we encounter a verb—and its

subject is explicitly left unspecified ("whoever they are"). On the one hand, they need not be named, as the descriptions are enough to identify them as Maruts; on the other hand, it is frequently stated that individual Maruts can't be told apart. The next two verses (2–3) are more dynamic, depicting the Maruts' usual wild journey, with its thunder, lightning, and rain.

The first half of verse 4 returns to the style of verse 1, with a torrent of adjectives, this time applied not to the plural Maruts, but to the singular "flock" (*gaṇá*). The second half of this verse opens with the 2nd sg. verb "you are." Although most interpreters take this as an address to the Marut flock, with a shift of person—and this would be the default reading—we believe something more tricky is going on. The patronymic of our poet Gotama is Rāhū*gaṇa*, whose second element is this word "flock." On the basis of this shared verbal designation, Gotama seems to be addressing himself and identifying himself with the Maruts, particularly as the "furtherer of this insight," that is, as a producer of sacral poetry arising from inner insight. (He may call himself a requiter of debts because he pays with his verbal labor for the benefits given by both gods and patrons.) He clarifies this identification in the following verse (5). We are poets because of our kinship with our ancestral father, that is, the Marut flock (pāda a). As with them, our speech ("tongue") is inspired by the vision ("eye") produced by soma (pāda b), and we aspire to emulate the Maruts, who chanted to Indra to encourage him in the Vr̥tra battle and acquired a share in the sacrifice (pādas cd). (The relationship between Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, the Maruts, and verbal inspiration is explored even more elaborately in the following hymn, I.88.)

The hymn ends (vs. 6) with a more conventional depiction of the Maruts.

1. Projecting power and strength, copious, unbowable, unfaltering, possessing the silvery drink,
   most delightful, most manly, with their unguents they have anointed themselves—whoever they are—like the ruddy (dawns) with stars.
2. When you have set your mind on journeying on the byways like birds, o Maruts, along who knows what path,
   the casks on your chariots drip. Sprinkle ghee the color of honey for the one who chants.
3. At their drives, at their journeys the earth trembles like one with faltering step, when they hitch up, for beauty.
   Playful, boisterous, with glinting spears, the shakers admire their own greatness.
4. For such is the flock: youthful, self-propelling, possessing dappled horses, irrepressible, showing mastery, swathed in powers.
   And you are a real, irreproachable requiter of debts, a furtherer of this insight here. Therefore you [=Gotama Rāhūgaṇa] are (also) a bullish flock.
5. We speak by virtue of our kinship with our primordial father; the tongue advances with the eye of soma.

When, equipped with chant, they [=Maruts] reached Indra by their labor, just after that they acquired names worthy of the sacrifice.

6. For splendor they join themselves with radiant beams, with rays, with those equipped with chant—the well-spangled ones,
possessing axes and arrows, fearless. They know their own dear Marut nature.

I.88 Maruts

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: prastārapaṅkti 1, 6; triṣṭubh 2–4; virāḍrūpā 5

Metrically, thematically, and poetically complex, this hymn brings Gotama's Marut collection to a worthy end. It is structured as a "journey" hymn—the Maruts' journey to and arrival at the sacrifice—but unlike the general run of such hymns, with stereotyped and simple expressions, this is a superbly crafted example of the genre, which develops in unpredictable directions.

The hymn is organized by pairs of verses. The first two describe the glittering flight of the Maruts, in fairly typical terms, with special emphasis on their chariots. The focus shifts to the waiting poets in the next verse pair (3–4). At the beginning of verse 3 the Maruts are said to "have axes on their bodies." This detail seems at first just to continue the inventory of the Maruts' equipment found in the previous verses, but the poet turns it into a telling image: the poets will raise up their poems "like trees," thus inviting the Maruts to chop them down with their axes—that is, to take possession of the poems. The next verse (4) picks up another superficially straightforward characterization of the Maruts and complicates it with reference to the poets. In verse 1 the Maruts were urged to "fly like birds" to the sacrifice; in verse 4 unspecified plural subjects "wheel like vultures" (pāda 1). In our view these vultures are the poets (the Gotamas named later in the verse), mentally circling around the *dhī́* "insight, poetic vision" (pāda b) that they are seeking in order to produce a *bráhman*, a "sacred formulation," fit for the Maruts. In the second half of the verse they succeed in making this *bráhman* (pāda c) and, in a different image, push the fountainhead of poetic inspiration upward in order to drink from it (pāda d). They had also been wheeling around the goddess *vārkāryā́* (pāda 4b). This hapax has been much discussed, and is generally considered to be the name of the Gotamas' muse, their "Sangeskunst." We will propose our own interpretation below.

The last two verses (5–6) depict the simultaneous arrival of the Maruts and of the inspired thought for the poem in their honor, again in complex and obscure imagery. The literary epiphany of a god is often marked linguistically by deictic pronouns and/or the aorist of immediacy ("just now"). The last two verses of I.88 begin with paired double deictics: (vs. 5) *etát tyád* and (vs. 6) *eṣā́ syā́* both meaning "this very," and verse 5 contains also the aorist *aceti* "has just appeared/been

perceived," marking the arrival of both the poem and the gods. Verse 6 is the most enigmatic of the hymn, though the general situation is clear: the Maruts have just arrived, and they are greeted—by something that both "sounds" and is "caused to sound." This something is identified as *anubhartrī́*, another feminine-gender hapax; it seems a good interpretive strategy to attempt to connect the two mysterious feminines, *vārkāryā́* in verse 4 and *anubhartrī́* here. Both of them are fairly easy to understand on a literal level: the former means literally "water-maker," while the latter is made up of the preverb *ánu* and an agent noun of the root *bhṛ*. The lexeme *ánu-bhṛ* has a quite specific value in the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda: it means "penetrate sexually, stick (one's penis) in." It is, of course, a piquant paradox that the "penis wielder" should be feminine. With this meaning in mind, *vārkāryā́* in verse 4 becomes somewhat clearer: the "water-maker" can also refer to the penis. But what would be the figurative or metaphorical sense of these two words, and how, in particular, can the literal sense be made to conform with the statements in verse 6 that the object is question both sounds and is made to sound? The riddle is solved if we assume that it is a musical instrument, and in fact that it is the first reference to the "Indian lute," the *vīṇā* (the first occurrence of that word is in the Taittirīya Saṃhitā, an early Vedic prose text), a noun of feminine gender. At least some of the forms of this musical instrument bear a remarkable resemblance to male genitalia. The poet brings his hymn to a climax with this clever sexual pun, which surely would have been appreciated by the lusty Maruts. (This verse and its role in the hymn are discussed in more detail in Jamison 1981.)

1. With your chariots fitted with lightning bolts and with spears, whose
   wings are horses, accompanied by lovely chants, drive here, o Maruts.
   Fly here like birds, with highest refreshment for us, you masters of
   artifice.
2. With the ruddy, tawny horses they drive at will for beauty, with their
   horses that outstrip chariots—
   provided with hatchets (the Marut flock) is sparkling like a brilliant.
   They keep pounding the earth with the wheel-rim of their chariot.
3. For splendor you have axes on your bodies; (the poets) will make their
   wise thoughts erect like trees
   for you, well-born Maruts. The powerfully brilliant ones [=Maruts] are
   running to the (pressing) stone.
4. For days, (like) vultures they have been wheeling around this insight for
   you, and around the goddess "Water-Maker" [=penis =vīṇā].
   Making a sacred formulation, with their chants the Gotamas have
   pushed the fountainhead erect, for drinking.
5. Just now it has appeared, not (even) a wagon-trek away—the
   (formulation) that Gotama (has made) in private for you, Maruts,
   upon seeing your golden-wheeled (chariots) and (you) copper-tusked
   boars streaking across (the sky).

6. Just now this "lady hornsman" [=penis-wielder =vīṇā] sounds in response to you, Maruts, like the voice of a cantor.
   (The player) has made (her) sound by the power of his hands, the way women like it.

I.89 All Gods

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
10 verses: jagatī 1–5, virāṭsthānā 6, triṣṭubh 8–10

Unlike Gotama's often clever and verbally inventive hymns to particular gods, this hymn to all the gods has a dutiful air, and the gods chosen for inclusion (or exclusion) don't seem to conform to any pattern. Still, there is a pleasing symmetry, especially at the beginning and end. This feature is clear in the first two verses of the hymn, where the word *bhadrá* "auspicious" is applied both to the ideas that mortals will acquire and turn into the praise hymns for the gods and to the favors that the gods will bestow on the properly worshiping humans in return. These unspecified benevolent gods return toward the end of the hymn (vss. 8–9), and the particular favor we desire from them is to secure our proper length of life (see esp. vss. 8cd, 9), the very request with which the first verse pair ended (vs. 2d)

In between are a series of verses invoking various gods and asking for their help. The longest list is found in verse 3, but gods or cosmic forces are named in every verse—from the very prominent, such as the various Ādityas (vs. 3) and Indra (vs. 6), to the obscure and marginal, notably Tārkṣya (vs. 6c), a deified racehorse, to judge from its other appearance in the R̥gveda (X.178). The final verse (10) returns to the Ādityan emphasis of verse 3 by identifying their mother Aditi with the most important cosmic features, kinship relations, and beings.

1. Let auspicious ideas come here to us from all sides—undeceivable, uncircumscribable, bursting out—
   so that the gods will be (ready) to increase us always, will be our unfaltering protectors every day.
2. The auspicious benevolence of the gods is for those who aim straight; let the generosity of the gods roll down toward us.
   We have reverently approached the fellowship of the gods: let the gods lengthen our lifetime for us to live.
3. Them do we call upon with our age-old formal invocation [=nivid]: Bhaga, Mitra, Aditi, Skill unfailing,
   Aryaman, Varuṇa, Soma, the Aśvins. May well-portioned Sarasvatī create joy for us.
4. At this let the Wind blow us a remedy that is joy itself. At this (let) Mother Earth, at this (let) Father Heaven,

at this (let) the soma-pressing stones (be) joy itself. To this, o holy Aśvins, give ear.

5. The one who holds sway, the lord of the moving and the still, who quickens insight, do we call upon for help,
so that Pūṣan will be (ready) to increase our possessions, will be a guardian, an undeceivable protector for our well-being.
6. Well-being for us (may) Indra of strengthened fame (establish); well-being for us (may) Pūṣan of all possessions;
well-being for us (may) Tārkṣya of indestructible wheel-rims; well-being for us may Bṛhaspati establish.
7. The Maruts having dappled horses, having Pṛśni as mother, charging to beauty, coming regularly to the rites,
the men having Agni as tongue and the Sun as eye: may all the gods come here to us with help.
8. Might we hear (only what is) auspicious with our ears, o gods; might we see (only what is) auspicious with our eyes, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice.
Having praised (you?), with sturdy limbs and bodies might we traverse the lifetime that has been established by the gods.
9. A hundred autumns are now in front (of us), o gods, where you have made old age for our bodies,
where sons become fathers. Do not harm our lifetime in the midst of our progress.
10. Aditi is heaven. Aditi is the midspace. Aditi is the mother; she is the father, she the son.
Aditi is the All Gods, the five peoples. Aditi is what has been born, Aditi what is to be born.

I.90 All Gods

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 9

In this hymn as in the last one it is clear that Gotama did not reserve his best efforts for All God hymns. With its elementary phraseology and patterned repetitions this hymn is blessedly easy to read but offers little of interest. It falls into three clear parts, which may well have been originally separate (though the hymn does not disturb the pattern of hymn arrangement in the Saṃhitā): verses 1–5, 6–8 (these two segments in the same meter), and 9.

The first segment begins with the principal Ādityas as our guides (vs. 1) and touches briefly on their general benefits to mortals in the next three verses. The final verse (5) is more specifically focused on the ritual interchange: the hymns we

offer to the gods should produce cows in return. The next segment (vss. 6–8) simply attributes metaphorical "honey" to all natural phenomena, while the last verse (9) expresses the hope that a variety of gods will be luck or welfare for us. This final verse is highly reminiscent of a much longer such litany in VII.35.

1. With straight guidance let Varuṇa, let Mitra the knowing guide us;
   let Aryaman jointly with the gods.
2. For they are goods-possessors of goods; unerring, they with their mighty powers
   guard the commandments everywhere.
3. They will extend shelter to us, the immortals to the mortals,
   thrusting away hatreds.
4. Let them clear out paths for us for easy passage—Indra, the Maruts,
   Pūṣan, Bhaga, (all those) to be extolled.
5. And (make) our poetic insights tipped with cows, o Pūṣan and Viṣṇu traveling your ways;
   make us possessed of well-being.
6. Honey do the winds (blow) to the one who follows truth; honey do the rivers stream.
   Honeyed be the plants for us.
7. Honey by night and at dawn; honeyed is the earthly realm.
   Honey be Father Heaven for us.
8. Honeyed be the tree for us, honeyed the sun.
   Honeyed be the cows for us.
9. Luck for us Mitra, luck Varuṇa; luck be Aryaman for us—
   Luck for us Indra and Bṛhaspati; luck for us Viṣṇu of the wide strides.

I.91 Soma

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
23 verses: triṣṭubh 1–4, gāyatrī 5–16, uṣṇih 17, triṣṭubh 18–23

Long and metrically disunified, this hymn no doubt falls into distinct segments, but there is no scholarly agreement about the exact divisions. Some verse groupings are found together in later liturgical texts (e.g., vss. 16–18, which, though in three different meters, agree in contents), but in other cases there is no external evidence. It is possible that the triṣṭubh verses at the beginning (vss. 1–4) and those at the end (vss. 19–23) belong together, with the dimeter verses 5–16 (plus 17–18) having been inserted between them. This is suggested by the fact that verse 19 starts with the same sequence as the beginning of verse 4 (*yā́ te dhā́māni*), and also by the apparent ring between 1a *prá cikitaḥ* and 23d *prá cikitsā*.

In any case this hymn shares both the rather simplified rhetoric and the totalizing thematics of Gotama's hymns to the All Gods. Soma is identified with numerous

gods (see, e.g., vss. 3, 5) and is credited with multiple cosmogonic deeds (e.g., vs. 22) and martial powers (e.g., vs. 21). Especially in the gāyatrī verses he is begged for all sorts of aid and comradeship.

Since this is not a Soma Pavamāna hymn and is not found in the IXth Maṇḍala, the ritual details that dominate that maṇḍala are essentially absent here. The exception is the aforementioned triad of verses 16–18, each of which contains a form of *ā́* √*pyā* "swell," an idiom used of the soaking of the soma stalks in water to make them swell up before their pressing. As this action occurs before the purification process proper, it is hardly mentioned in the IXth Maṇḍala (twice in fact, once [IX.31.4] in an exact repetition of the present vs. 16 in a hymn attributed to our poet Gotama Rāhūgaṇa), while it is the most prominent ritual detail in this hymn.

1. You, Soma, have become conspicuous through our inspired thought.
   You—lead along the straightest path.
   Through your guidance, o drop, our insightful forefathers had their share in the treasure among the gods.
2. You, Soma, become very intent through your intentions; very skillful with your skills, all-knowing.
   You are a bull through your bullish powers, your greatness. You became brilliant through your brilliancies, drawing the gaze of men.
3. The commandments of King Varuṇa are yours; lofty and deep is your domain, o Soma.
   You are blazing pure, like dear Mitra. You are besought for skill like Aryaman, o Soma.
4. Your domains that are in heaven, that are on the earth, that are in the mountains, in the plants, in the waters—
   with all those, being well-disposed and not angry, King Soma, accept our oblations.
5. You, Soma, are lord of the settlements; you are king and Vr̥tra-smasher.
   You are auspicious intention.
6. And if you will wish us to live, Soma, we will not die.
   (You are) the lord of the forest to whom praise is dear.
7. You, Soma, (establish) good fortune for the great man, you, for the youth who pursues the truth;
   you establish skill for living.
8. You, King Soma—guard us on all sides from the one who bears malice.
   No comrade of one such as you could suffer harm.
9. Soma, your forms of help that are joy itself for the pious man,
   with those become our helper.
10. This sacrifice here—having delighted in this speech, come near to it.
    Soma, be (ready) to strengthen us.

11. Soma, we who know speech strengthen you with our hymns.
    Very compassionate to us, enter us.
12. Fattening the livestock, smiting afflictions, finding goods, increasing prosperity,
    Soma, be a good ally to us.
13. Soma, take pleasure in our heart, as cows do in pastures,
    as a young man in his prime does in his own home.
14. O Soma, the mortal who will take pleasure in your comradeship, o god,
    him does skill accompany, him does the sage poet.
15. Make a broad space for us against imprecation; Soma, protect us from narrow straits.
    Be a comrade well disposed to us.
16. Swell up! Let your bullish power come together from all sides, Soma.
    Be there at the gathering for the prize.
17. Swell up, most exhilarating Soma, with all your shoots.
    Become our comrade of best fame, to strengthen us.
18. Let your milk-drinks come together and together your prizes, together the bullish powers of you who vanquish hostility.
    Swelling up for the immortal, Soma, establish your own highest measures of fame in heaven.
19. Those domains of yours that they sacrifice to with oblation, let all these of yours be encompassing the sacrifice.
    Fattening the livestock, furthering (us), bringing good heroes, not smiting heroes, o Soma, advance to our doorways.
20. Soma gives a milk-cow, Soma a swift steed, Soma a hero fit for action—
    one fit for the residence, for the rite, for the assembly, one who brings fame to the forefathers—(gives these to the man) who will do ritual service to him.
21. Invincible in combats, in battles a deliverer, winning the sun, winning the waters, herdsman of the community,
    born at raids, granting good dwelling and good fame, conquering—you would we celebrate, o Soma.
22. You, Soma, begot all these plants here; you the waters, you the cows.
    You have stretched across the wide midspace; you have uncovered the darkness with your light.
23. With your god(like) mind, god Soma, battle for a share of wealth for us, mighty one.
    Don’t let it hold out on you. You are master of heroism. On behalf of both (men and gods? / singers and patrons?) be on the lookout in the quest for cattle.

I.92 Dawn (1–15), Aśvins (16–18)

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
18 verses: jagatī 1–4, triṣṭubh 5–12, uṣṇih 13–18

This metrically complex structure with two different dedicands must originally have consisted of several independent hymns—probably, with Oldenberg, verses 1–4, 5–8, 9–12, 13–15, 16–18, all but the last dedicated to Dawn. Indeed, the first two segments (vss. 1–4 in jagatī, 5–8 in triṣṭubh) appear to be partial variants of each other, the first describing multiple Dawns (except vs. 4), the second a single Dawn. There are precise agreements in lexicon, phraseology, and imagery, particularly between verses 1–2 and 5–6, that go beyond standard shared Dawn vocabulary. The seductive dancing girl of verse 4 also reminds of the smiling siren of verse 6. The third segment (vss. 9–12) has fewer connections with the first two, but is thematically unified, especially by the emphasis on "diminishing/belittling" (all expressed by the root *mī* in different combinations) in verses 10–12.

All three of the segments in trimeter meter (that is, through vs. 12) contain arresting images, and the poet enjoys exploiting ambiguities to poetic effect. In verses 1 and 12, for example, he uses different syntactic constructions in the simile and the frame because the verb held in common by both can be either reflexive or transitive; in verse 3 the pun inherent in the root *arc* (both "shine" and "chant") allows the introduction of a simile involving female work-songs, though the dawns themselves are presumably not chanting.

The last two segments, in uṣṇih meter, to Dawn and the Aśvins respectively (vss. 13–15, 16–18), are, not surprisingly, less complex. Both hope for the arrival of the divinities at the sacrifice, accompanied by plenty of presents.

1. These very Dawns have made themselves a beacon. In the eastern half of the dusky realm they anoint their beam [=sacrificial post].
   Presenting themselves, as bold ones present arms, the reddish cows, the mothers come toward (us).
2. Their ruddy beams have flown up at will. They have yoked their reddish cows, easy to yoke.
   The Dawns have made their patterns as of old. A gleaming beam have the reddish ones propped up.
3. They chant [/shine] like women busy with their labors, (coming always) along the same route from afar,
   conveying refreshment to the man of good action [=sacrificer], the man of good gifts, the man who sacrifices and presses soma all the days.
4. She strews ornaments on herself like a dancing girl. She uncovers her breast like a ruddy (cow) her udder [?].
   Making light for all creation, Dawn has opened up the darkness as cows (would) their pen.

5. Her gleaming ray has appeared opposite. She spreads herself out, thrusts away the black void.
The Daughter of Heaven has propped up her bright beam, her ornament, like (a priest) propping up the sacrificial post, the ornament at the ceremonies, and anointing it.
6. We have crossed to the further shore of this darkness. Dawn, dawning, is making her patterns.
Like one aiming to please, she, shining forth, smiles for splendor. She of the lovely face has awakened (us?) to benevolence.
7. Light-filled leader of liberalities, the Daughter of Heaven is praised by the Gotamas.
O Dawn, mete out prizes rich in offspring, rich in men, founded on horses, tipped with cows.
8. O Dawn, might I attain this glorious wealth, rich in good heroes, founded on horses, with alien-slaves as its forelock—
o you of good portion, who with fame of wondrous power radiate forth, motivated by (desire for) the prize, to lofty (wealth).

9. The goddess, overseeing all creatures, (like) an eye, facing toward them, shines forth widely.
Awakening all life to activity, she has found the speech of every zealous one.
10. Being born again and again though ancient, (always) beautifying herself to the same hue,
like a successful (gambler) with the best throw who diminishes the stake (of his opponent), the goddess keeps diminishing the lifetime of the mortal as she ages him.
11. Uncovering the ends of heaven, she has awakened. She keeps her sister [=Night] far away.
Diminishing human (life-)spans, the maiden radiates forth with the eye of her swain [=Sun].
12. The bright, well-portioned one spreading herself as if (dispersing) cattle, like a river (spreading) its surge, she has whitened forth widely.
Not belittling the divine commandments, she has come into view, appearing along with the rays of the sun.

13. Dawn, bring that bright (gift) here to us—you who are rich in prize mares—
by which we may acquire both progeny and posterity.
14. Dawn, here today—o radiant one rich in cows and horses—
richly dawn forth to us, o liberal-spirited one.
15. So yoke the ruddy horses today! O Dawn rich in prize mares;
then convey to us all good portions.

16. Aśvins, (drive) your circuit that brings cows and gold, right up to us, wondrous ones.
    Stop your chariot nearby, like-minded ones.
17. You two, who have made your signal-call (reach) all the way to heaven and at the same time made light for the people,
    convey nourishment here to us, you Aśvins.
18. The two gods, embodiments of joy, wondrous, of golden course—
    let (the priests) waking at dawn convey them here, for soma-drinking.

I.93 Agni and Soma

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
12 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–3, triṣṭubh 4–8, gāyatrī 9–11, triṣṭubh 12

Another metrically complex hymn, this is the last attributed to Gotama Rāhūgaṇa in Maṇḍala I. Despite the variety of meters, the piece is unified by the emphasis on the two gods to whom it is dedicated, and especially by the presence of the dvandva compound *agnī́-ṣómā* "Agni and Soma" in every verse. This compound is found only twice elsewhere in the R̥gveda (both times in Maṇḍala X). Although Agni and Soma are the quintessential ritual divinities, each representing a crucial sacrificial substance, this is the only hymn in the R̥gveda explicitly dedicated to them together, and it is a fairly banal product. However, it is worth noting that, at least in our view, V.44, sometimes called the hardest hymn in the R̥gveda, seems to concern Agni and Soma simultaneously, though it is identified in the Anukramaṇī as an All God hymn.

The essential unity of the hymn is also discernible in its fairly simple thematic-cum-syntactic structure, which regularly constructs the verse as a relative clause referring to the actions of a pious mortal ("whoever serves [etc.]…"), and a main clause expressing his reward (see vss. 2–3, 8, 10), as well as in repeated vocabulary in the earlier and later parts (see, e.g., matches between vss. 2 and 8, 3 and 10). The hymn also has an outer ring: the last word (12d *śruṣṭimántam* "having an attentive hearing") recalls the first verb of the hymn (1b *śr̥ṇutam*), the imperative "hear, listen!"

One part of the hymn stands out, verses 4–6, which ascribe various mythological deeds to the pair. Curiously, the deeds in verses 4 and 5 are really more appropriate to other gods: the mysterious Br̥saya and the theft in verse 4 are found also in a hymn to the river goddess Sarasvatī (VI.61.1, 3), while verse 5 sounds like a generic praise of Indra. In verse 6, however, we do find mythological material appropriate to the two gods addressed, namely the story of the stealing of those gods. This is, tellingly, the only place in the hymn where the two gods are treated separately: Mātariśvan is the figure who stole fire, while the falcon's theft of soma from heaven is also often alluded to.

1. Agni and Soma, hear this call of mine, you bulls.
   Delight in the well-spoken hymns. Become refreshment for the pious man.
2. Agni and Soma, whoever today renders this speech as service for you two,
   for him establish an abundance of heroes, the thriving of cattle, an abundance of horses.
3. Agni and Soma, whoever will piously perform a poured offering or the preparation of an oblation for you,
   he along with his offspring will attain to an abundance of heroes and a complete lifespan.
4. Agni and Soma, this heroic deed of you two has become conspicuous—that you stole the provender, the cows from the niggard.
   You brought low the posterity of Bṛsaya. You found the single light for the many.
5. You, Soma and Agni, of like resolve, placed these lights in heaven.
   You, Agni and Soma, released from imprecation and from reproach the rivers that had been held back.
6. Mātariśvan bore the one here from heaven; the falcon stole the other from the rock.
   Agni and Soma, having grown strong through a sacred formulation, you have made wide space for the sacrifice.
7. Agni and Soma, the oblation set before you—pursue it; yearn for it, bulls; enjoy it.
   Since you are providers of good shelter and good help, therefore establish luck and lifetime for the sacrificer.
8. Whoever will serve Agni and Soma with an oblation, with a mind turned toward the gods, with ghee,
   guard his (ritual) ordinance; protect him from narrow straits; to his clan, to his people extend great shelter.
9. O Agni and Soma, who have common property and a common invocation—crave our hymns.
   You two have come together among the gods.
10. Agni and Soma, whoever piously honors you with this (oblation), who honors you with ghee,
    for him shine loftily.
11. Agni and Soma, you will enjoy these oblations of ours here.
    Together drive right up to us.
12. Agni and Soma, deliver our steeds (to safety). Let the ruddy (cows) who sweeten the oblations swell up.
    In us and in our benefactors establish powers. Give our ceremony an attentive hearing.

Most of the next 22 hymns (94–115) are attributed to Kutsa Āṅgirasa by the Anukramaṇī. Though a few (99–100, alternatively 105) have other poets named, the presence of the Kutsa refrain in both 100 and 105 (99 is a one-verse hymn) supports the unity of the collection. The Kutsa refrain, in triṣṭubh, "This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven," occupies the last hemistich of the last verse of every hymn except I.97 (a gāyatrī hymn), 99 (a one-verse hymn), and 104 (though this last hymn is in triṣṭubh).

The Agni hymns (94–99) are each dedicated to a different form of Agni. There follow, in the normal order, five hymns to Indra, three to the All Gods, with miscellaneous other divinities making up the collection. The collection is at a generally high level of poetic craftsmanship, but we will only single out for special mention 104, a challenging Indra hymn, 105, a famous and enigmatic All God hymn, and the lovely Dawn hymn 113.

I.94 Agni

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15–16

The first fourteen verses in this hymn, in jagatī, end with the refrain "while in company with you may we not come to harm." The first half of the hymn (vss. 1–7) gives little motivation for this repeated, preventative hope: the subject is primarily the sacrifice and the mutually beneficial relationship between Agni and the sacrificers. But in verses 8 and 9 evil rivals of the sacrificer appear, and Agni's aid against them is requested. The next two verses (10–11) sketch the dangers posed by Agni himself as the uncontrolled forest fire, and verse 12 calls for Agni's help against the most potent menace of all, the anger of the gods. The remaining verses (13–16) return to the reassuring realm of properly performed sacrifice, with Agni providing benefits and protection to the ritualist.

1. For Jātavedas, who deserves this praise, we would bring it into being like a chariot, with our inspired thought,
   for his solicitude for us in the assembly is beneficial. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
2. For whom you perform sacrifice, that one reaches his goal. Without assault he dwells in peace; he will acquire good heroes en masse.
   He is powerful; constraint does not reach him. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
3. Might we be able to kindle you. Send our insights to their goal. The gods eat the oblation poured in you.
   Convey the Ādityas here, for we are eager for them. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.

4. We shall bring the kindling, and we shall make oblations to you, while being attentive at each (ritual) juncture.
   For us to live longer, send our insights to their goal. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
5. His kinfolk [=flames], the herdsmen of the clans, (of) both the two-footed and the four-footed, roam by night.
   You are the great, bright sign of dawn. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
6. You are the Adhvaryu and the primordial Hotar, the Praśāstar and the Potar, by birth the one placed in front [/Purohita].
   Wise, you prosper all the priestly offices, o insightful one. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
7. You of lovely face who have the same appearance in all directions—even though far in the distance, you shine across (it [=distance]) as if right there.
   You see across even the blind darkness of night. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
8. Let the chariot of the soma-presser be in front, o gods, and let our recitation dominate those whose insight is evil.
   Take heed of this speech (of ours) and prosper it. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
9. With fatal weapons strike away those of evil recitation and of evil insight, and whatever rapacious ones are in the distance or nearby.
   Then for the sacrifice and for the singer make an easy way. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
10. When you have harnessed the pair of ruddy, wind-sped chestnuts to your chariot and your bellowing is like that of a bull,
   then you spur on the trees [/the winners] with (a flame) whose beacon is smoke. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
11. And then the winged are afraid of your roar, when your "drops" [=sparks], consuming the grasslands, have spread out.
   That (makes) an easy way for your own little "chariots" [=flames?]. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
12. This (Agni) here is to be suckled, as the unerring appeaser of the anger of Mitra and Varuṇa and of the Maruts.
   Have mercy upon us! Let the mind of these (gods) be once again (as before). – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
13. As a god, of the gods you are Mitra, the unerring ally. As a Vasu [/good one], of the Vasus you are the one beloved at the rite.
   Might we be in your broadest shelter. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.

14. This is your benefit—that, when kindled in your own house and bepoured with soma, you remain wakeful as the most merciful (of gods).
    You provide property and treasure to the man who ritually serves. – O Agni, while in company with you may we not come to harm.
15. For whom you will perform ritual service, o you possessing good property, for whom there is blamelessness in his entirety, o Aditi [=Innocence],
    and whom you will rouse with your beneficial power and with generosity that provides offspring—might we be those.
16. You, o Agni, knowing the quality of good fortune—for us extend our lifetime here, o god.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.95 Agni (or Agni Auṣasa "Agni at Dawn")

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A typical puzzle hymn in many ways. The dedicand of the hymn, Agni, does not appear by name until verse 9, and there are only two occurrences of the name, both vocatives, in the whole hymn (the second being in the final, summary verse 11). The address to Agni in verse 9 also breaks the uninterrupted 3rd-person description that holds sway in the hymn up to that point. In what precedes, Agni's characteristics, the ritual service given to him, and the entities that render that service are referred to in oblique fashion.

The Anukramaṇī suggests that it is Agni "at dawn" who is the subject of the hymn, and indeed the hymn is specifically concerned with the birth, that is, the kindling, of the ritual fire at daybreak. The birth imagery dominates the first verses, with Night and Dawn suckling Agni as their calf (vs. 1) and the fingers of the officiants begetting him (vs. 2). Three births of Agni are mentioned in verse 3; though there is some disagreement about whether the three entities mentioned in pāda b are the sites of the three births, in our opinion only two sites are found there (the sea and the heavenly waters), and the third birth is the ritual birth that occupied the first two verses. Again in our opinion, the second half of verse 3 concerns the removal of the oblation fire (the fire later called the Āhavanīya) to the east.

The remaining verses of the hymn describe the growing strength of the newly born fire, first barely visible in the kindling sticks (vs. 4), but with flames rising higher and higher (see esp. vss. 7–8) as he also spreads across the ground (vss. 8–9). The expected requests for aid and gifts are rather muted and perfunctory (vss. 9cd and 11b); the focus is on the riddling descriptions.

The hymn displays some omphalos characteristics: the middle verses (5–6) show responsion, and there is a wisp of a ring in the lexical repetitions between verses 2 and 9. But the omphalos effect is not strong.

1. The two of different form [=Night and Dawn] proceed, having (the same) good goal: one after the other, the two suckle their calf.
   At the one [=Dawn] he becomes tawny, possessing his own powers; in the other [=Night] he is seen blazing, intensely lustrous.
2. The ten (fingers) beget this babe of Tvaṣṭar—the tireless young women (beget the babe) to be carried about.
   Sharp-faced, self-glorious, shining widely among the peoples—him do they lead around.
3. They attend upon his three births: one in the sea, one in the heaven, in the waters.
   (Going) forth along the forward quarter of the earthly realms [=to the east], directing the (ritual) sequences, he has distributed them in proper order.
4. Who of you perceives this one in hiding? The calf begets his mothers with its own powers.
   The babe moves away from the lap of the many hardworking women, the great poet possessing his own powers.
5. The beloved one, manifest, grows strong among them—the self-glorious one upright in the lap of those aslant.
   Both (world-halves) are afraid of (the babe) of Tvaṣṭar while he is being born, (but turning) back to face him, the two give the lion pleasure in return.
6. Both give pleasure like excellent wives. Like bellowing cows they (all [=men]) have reverently approached (him) in their own ways.
   He has become the skill-lord of skills, whom they anoint from the right (/south) with oblations.
7. Like Savitar, he raises up his arms again and again. He aligns himself along the two seams (of the world?), the fearsome one charging straight on.
   He thrusts his blazing cloak up from his very self; he leaves behind new clothes for his mothers.
8. He makes for himself a glittering form, which is (even) higher, as he mingles with the cows and waters in his seat.
   The poet keeps grooming his foundation all around, while his insight is being groomed. He has become the meeting point with the assemblage of the gods.
9. Your broad expanse encompasses your foundation, the wide-shining domain of the buffalo.
   When kindled, o Agni, protect us with all your self-glorious, undeceivable protectors.

10. He makes himself a stream in the wasteland, a way, and a wave. With blazing waves he reaches the ground.
    He takes all the old things [=dry wood] in his bellies; he roams within the new, fruitful (plants).
11. In just this way, o Agni, as you grow strong though the kindling wood, shine out richly for fame, o pure one.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.96 Agni (or Agni Draviṇodā "Agni Wealth-Giver")

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh

Simpler and more straightforward than the previous hymn, this one shares a final verse (9) as well as some themes with I.95: see especially verse 5, where Night and Dawn suckle Agni, the calf, which matches I.95.1, where the two mothers were unidentified.

A pāda-length refrain is found in the first seven verses; in the last two of these (vss. 6–7) the refrain is integrated syntactically into the verse: pāda c with pāda d in 6, the whole verse in 7, while in the first five verses the refrain is independent. Agni has the epithet "wealth-giver" in this refrain, and in the eighth verse (post-refrain) that epithet, repeated four times, is the focus. This verse expresses the poet's desire for the various types of Agni's "wealth," a typical finale. In the earlier parts of the hymn (vss. 1–5), however, it is not Agni's material gifts that are dominant, but his ritual and cosmogonic properties, though his relation to wealth surfaces in verses 6–7 (see also 4a). This gradual integration of the refrain into the fabric of the hymn, both syntactically and thematically, shows how a skillful poet can deploy even something as apparently inert as an invariant refrain in building a forward-moving composition.

1. Being born with strength as of old, at once he has acquired all poetic powers—yes indeed!
   Both the waters and the holy place [=earth] make the ally [=Agni] succeed. – The gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.
2. With the age-old formal invocation [=nivid] and the poetic power of Āyu he begot these offspring of Manu's people;
   with Vivasvant [=Sun] as his eye (he begot) heaven and the waters. – The gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.
3. The Ārya clans solemnly invoke him as the foremost one, bringing the sacrifice to success when bepoured, aiming straight,
   the son of nourishment, the Bharata, possessing buttery drops. – The gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.
4. As Mātariśvan he brings prosperity filled with many desirable things; as the finder of the sun, he finds a way for his lineage.

He is the herdsman of the clans, the begetter of the two worlds. – The gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.

5. Night and Dawn, ever exchanging their color, together suckle their single child.
   Between heaven and earth the bright ornament shines out. – The gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.
6. The foundation of wealth, the assembler of goods, the beacon of the sacrifice, the bird bringing our thoughts to success.
   Protecting their immortality, protecting him, the gods uphold Agni, the wealth-giver.
7. Both now and before the seat of riches, the ground of what has been born and is being born,
   the herdsman of what is and of much coming into being—Agni, the wealth-giver, do the gods uphold.
8. The wealth-giver (shall offer) of his surpassing wealth; the wealth-giver shall offer of (his wealth) along with superior men.
   The wealth-giver (shall grant) us refreshment accompanied by heroes; the wealth-giver shall grant long lifetime.
9. In just this way, o Agni, as you grow strong though the kindling wood, shine out richly for fame, o pure one.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.97 Agni (or Agni Śuci "Blazing Agni")

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
8 verses: gāyatrī

Like the previous hymn, this one has a refrain, which is also not always syntactically integrated in the verse. But here the independence is more jarring because the refrain is just a participial phrase, not a self-contained clause. The rest of this brief hymn consists of snatches of expressed hopes for the well-being of the sacrificers and the patrons and for Agni's aid in overcoming hostilities. The Sanskrit contains a pleasing counterpoint of preverbs, which cannot be easily rendered in English.

1. Blazing away the bad for us, blaze wealth here, o Agni,
   —blazing away the bad for us.
2. With a desire for good lands, for easy passage, and for goods we offer sacrifice,
   —(you) blazing away the bad for us—
3. So that the most fortunate one of these (would become) preeminent, and preeminent our own patrons,
   —(you) blazing away the bad for us—

4. So that we and our patrons would be further propagated through you, o Agni,
   —(you) blazing away the bad for us—
5. When the beams of powerful Agni go forth in all directions
   —(you) blazing away the bad for us.
6. For you, o you who face in all directions, encompass (everything) in all directions
   —blazing away the bad for us.
7. O you who face in all directions, carry us across hostilities as if with a boat
   —blazing away the bad for us.
8. Carry us across (them), as if across a river with a boat, to well-being
   —blazing away the bad for us.

I.98 Agni Vaiśvānara

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
3 verses: triṣṭubh

A rather perfunctory and quite brief hymn, with phraseology borrowed from other hymns. Verse 2 seems to refer to the myth of the Agni's disappearance.

1. Might we be in the favor of Vaiśvānara, for he is the king and full glory of the creatures.
   Born from here, he surveys this whole (world). Vaiśvānara aligns himself with the sun.
2. Sought in heaven and sought on earth, being sought, Agni entered all the plants.
   Sought forcefully, let Agni Vaiśvānara protect us from harm by day and by night.
3. Vaiśvānara, let this come true of you: let riches and generous patrons accompany us.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.99 Agni Jātavedas

Kaśyapa Mārīca
1 verse: triṣṭubh

This one-verse hymn is the shortest of the Ṛgveda. Embedded in the Kutsa hymns and placed at the end of his Agni cycle (I.94–98), it is the only hymn attributed to Kaśyapa Mārīca in Maṇḍala I, though a number of hymns and verses in hymns

are ascribed to him elsewhere, especially in Maṇḍala IX. Its message is simple and straightforward. The imagery of the boat and the river matches that in I.97.7–8. Both because of this agreement and because the first of Kutsa's Agni hymns begins with a praise of Jātavedas, also in the dative case (I.94.1a), this hymn seems well integrated in the Kutsa cycle.

1. For Jātavedas we will press soma. He will burn down the property of the hostile.
   He will carry us across all difficult passages, across difficult transits, as if with a boat across a river—Agni.

I.100 Indra

Five Vārṣāgira poets: R̥jrāśva, Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna, and Surādhas
19 verses: triṣṭubh

This first Indra hymn in the Kutsa collection is assigned by the Anukramaṇī to five named poets with the patronymic Vārṣāgira, only one of whom (Ambarīṣa, of IX.98) is known from elsewhere. However, the hymn ends with the Kutsa refrain (vs. 19cd), and the Vārṣāgira attribution must come from the dānastuti, where the names of these five poets are mentioned (vs. 17, see also 16).

The first fifteen verses (up to the dānastuti, vss. 16–19) end with a refrain linking Indra to the Maruts, and one of the main themes of the hymn is comradeship: Indra joined not only with the Maruts but with other like-minded beings (see, e.g., vss. 4–5, 10–11). The context is almost exclusively martial, as Indra joins with his forces and his powers to conquer various foes, though his standard opponents, like Vr̥tra, are curiously absent. The insistent presence of the Maruts may mark this as a hymn for the Midday Pressing, where Indra and Maruts share the oblation. The next hymn also has a strong Marut presence.

The dānastuti finale begins (vs. 16) with the praise of the gift, a fine mare, but, after naming the Vārṣāgiras (vs. 17), ends with straightforward praise of Indra.

Verbally the hymn is structured by the frequent hemistich-initial occurrences of the pronoun *sá* "he," reinforced by plays on this syllable: for instance, verse 1c *satīnásatvā*, 18cd *sánat*. There are also a number of hapaxes, whose translations are provisional (see vss. 8, 12, 16).

1. He who, as bull at home with his bullish powers, is sovereign king of great heaven and of earth,
   the one having trusty warriors is to be invoked in raids. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.

2. Whose course, like the sun's, cannot be reached, (who has) obstacle-smashing bluster in every raid,
the most bullish one (should come) with his comrades along his own ways. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
3. Whose paths, like those of heaven, go milking out (the milk of) their semen, unencompassible in their vastness,
he, overcoming hatred, is victorious through his male powers. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
4. He has become the best Aṅgiras with the Aṅgirases, a bull with the bulls, while being a comrade with his comrades,
a versifier with versifiers, preeminent along the routes. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
5. He, the skillful one, along with the Rudras [=Maruts] as if with his own sons having conquered his foes at the time for men-conquering,
along with the nest-mates [=Maruts] bringing to triumph (deeds) worthy of fame. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
6. He, confounding the battle-fury (of the foe), the creator of the battle-elation (of the allies), has won the sun along with *our* men
on this very day, the lord of the settlements invoked by many. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
7. Him do his help(er)s [=Maruts] cause to take pleasure in the contest of champions; him do the settled peoples make the protector of their peace.
He alone is lord of every undertaking. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
8. Him they inspired [?] in the upsurgings of his vast power—the men inspired [?] the man to help, inspired [?] him to the stakes.
He found the light even in blind darkness. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
9. He with his left (hand) will hold fast even the overweening (foes), in his right will hold (all) winning throws massed together.
He, even in association with a weakling, is the winner of the stakes. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
10. As a winner with his hordes, a winner with his chariots, he is known by all the communities now today.
He with his male powers prevails over taunts. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
11. Since with his kindred or with his non-kin he will drive together (the warriors? the spoils?) when the prize of battle (is at stake), he is invoked by many in (many) ways
for the conquering of the waters, of life and lineage. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.

12. He is the mace-bearer, the Dasyu-smasher, fearsome, mighty, of a thousand insights and a hundred counsels, skillful—
like a beaker [?] in his vastness, belonging to the five peoples.
– Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
13. His mace roars alongside, sun-winning, like the reverberating, vehement bellowing of heaven.
Him do gains follow, him prizes. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
14. Whose inexhaustible measure in its vastness, (like our) hymn, will coil around both worlds on all sides,
he will deliver (us) with his strategies while he is rejoicing.
– Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
15. The limit of whose vast power no gods in their divinity, nor mortals, nor even the waters have reached—
he projects with his energy beyond earth and heaven. – Accompanied by the Maruts, let Indra be here for us with help.
16. A chestnut, dusky mare, marked with "stalks" [?] and a blaze, heaven-bright, a portion of the wealth of R̥jrāśva,
drawing a chariot with bulls at the chariot-poles, gladdening, has distinguished herself among the clans of Nahuṣa.
17. This very hymn is for you, Indra the bull. The Vārṣāgiras greet your largesse—
R̥jrāśva with his sidekicks, Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna, Surādhas.
18. Invoked by many in (many) ways, having smashed the Dasyus and the Śimyus to the earth, he has laid them low with his missile.
He has won a dwelling place along with his bright comrades [=Maruts]; he has won the sun; he has won the waters—he with the good mace.
19. Let Indra always speak up for us. Not led astray, may we win the prize.
– This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.101 Indra

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī 1–7, triṣṭubh 8–11

The structure of this hymn is under tight control, giving pleasure both by its predictable repetitions and by their breaches. Though the hymn falls into two unequal metrical segments, there is no reason not to consider it a unity: the two segments complement each other, structurally and thematically. (One might fancifully compare it to the 8 / 6 structure of a Petrarchan sonnet.)

The jagatī section (vss. 1–7) is characterized most obviously by its refrain, occupying all of the fourth pāda of each verse. Interestingly this refrain lacks the name

Indra, though this name appears in first or (modified) second position in each of the third pādas, save for verse 1. Instead it is his connection with the Maruts that is foregrounded in the refrain, using the same stem, though in a different case, that appeared in the refrain of I.100. Verses 1 and 7 also deviate from the signature stylistic feature of the middle verses (2–6), that the first three-fourths of these verses are all relative clauses: a form of the relative pronoun begins each verse, and each of the two subsequent pādas in each verse contains (and often begins) with at least one. (Note the explosion of relative pronouns in the final verse 6: five in three pādas.) This arrangement, with most of the verse devoted to relative clauses but ending with a main clause refrain, reminds us of the famous Indra hymn II.12, with its identificatory refrain "He, o peoples, is Indra!" But this one is more complex, in that Indra is *not* identified directly in the refrain. The jagatī section is also demarcated by a faint ring, the verb "address" (*prá… arcatā* 1a, *abhy àrcati* 7c), and by the fact that Indra is referred to only in the 3rd person in a series of definitional descriptions in the indicative.

By contrast, the triṣṭubh verses (8–11) switch to direct address to Indra (save for the final, summary verse with the Kutsa refrain) and to urgent invitations to him to come to our sacrifice. The Marut theme is continued, however—already in the first pāda of the first triṣṭubh verse (8a) with a vocative of the same stem (*marútvant* "accompanied by the Maruts") that dominated the jagatī refrain. (See also 9c, 11a.) A faint ring also defines the triṣṭubh verses, with *vr̥jána* "(ritual) circle" in both 8b and 11a.

As for content, it is largely familiar, praising Indra for his victories over various enemies, for his aid to mortals hard pressed in battle, and for his steadfast lordship. Needless to say, the Marut element is quite strong, as in the preceding hymn (I.110). The most striking formulation may be found in the first verse, with its image of Indra causing the fortresses of the enemy to abort their fetuses.

1. Address a nourishing speech to the exultant one, who, along with
   R̥jiśvan, aborted the (strongholds) with their black embryos.
   Seeking help from the bull with the mace in his right hand, the one
   accompanied by the Maruts do we call for partnership.
2. Who with his bristling battle-fury smote the one with its shoulders apart
   [=Vr̥tra =cobra], who smote Śambara, who smote Pipru who followed
   no commandment,
   Indra, who wrenched down insatiable Śuṣṇa—the one accompanied by
   the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.
3. Whose great masculine nature Heaven and Earth (strengthen); in whose
   commandment is Varuṇa, in whose is Sūrya,
   Indra, whose commandment the rivers follow—the one accompanied by
   the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.
4. Who of horses, who of cows is the herdsman exerting his will; who is
   acknowledged as steadfast in every action,

Indra, who is the weapon of death for the non-presser, even one standing firm—the one accompanied by the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.

5. Who is the lord of everything moving and breathing, who first found the cows for the maker of sacred formulations,
   Indra, who brought the Dasyus down low—the one accompanied by the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.
6. Who is to be called upon by champions and who by the fearful, who is called upon by those on the run and who by the victors,
   Indra, whom all beings altogether set their sights on—the one accompanied by the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.
7. At the Rudras' [=Maruts'] direction he goes, wide-gazing; along with the Rudras the maiden [=Rodasī] stretches her broad expanse.
   Indra the famed does the inspired thought address—the one accompanied by the Maruts do we call upon for partnership.
8. Whether you, accompanied by the Maruts, will reach exhilaration in the furthest seat or in the nearest (ritual) circle,
   from there journey here to our ceremony: with desire for you we have made an oblation, o you whose generosity is real.
9. With desire for you we have pressed soma, o very skillful Indra; with desire for you we have made an oblation, o you whose vehicle is the sacred formulation.
   So, you with your teams, flocking with the Maruts—reach exhilaration at this sacrifice here, on this ritual grass.
10. Reach exhilaration along with the fallow bays that are yours, Indra. Unfasten your two lips; unloose the two nourishing streams.
    Let your fallow bays convey you here, lovely-lipped one. Eagerly take pleasure in our oblations.
11. As herdsmen of the (ritual) circle that offers praise to the Maruts, may we win the prize with Indra.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.102 Indra

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī 1–7, triṣṭubh 8–11

The structure of this hymn is superficially identical to that of its immediate predecessor, I.101: eleven verses, the first seven in jagatī, the last four triṣṭubh. But the tight syntactic and formulaic control of I.101 is not present here. Nonetheless, the

hymn is stitched together by lexical repetitions, and the two metrically diverse segments show especially strong lexical responsions.

The hymn begins with a difficult verse, which has received a number of incompatible interpretations. Ours is, perhaps, especially bold, in that we assume that the poet (in the 1st person) is speaking to a "you" who is not the god (as most people assume), but the human praise singer, who may, in fact, be the poet himself. (Such incompatibilities in address are not infrequent in such ritual situations; the poet often addresses himself in the 2nd person; see discussion in Jamison 2009a.) The poet thus announces that the composition of his poem is complete and it is ready to be recited to its object, the god, who is present in the verse in the 3rd person.

After naming the cosmic forces whose activities provide support to Indra (vs. 2), the poet turns to two intertwined themes: the aid we beg from Indra in conflicts and contests, where, we know, our rivals and foes will be seeking the same aid (esp. vss. 3–6, 9–10), and the immeasurable power Indra commands, power that accounts for the desire of all contenders to get him on their side (esp. vss. 6–8). These latter verses play with forms of the root *mā* "measure, match." The transition between the jagatī and triṣṭubh sections is especially nicely handled: having claimed in verses 6–7 that Indra has no match in strength, verse 8 takes up the exact phrase from verse 6, but asserts that indeed there does exist such a match—but it consists of the whole cosmos in all its divisions. The next verse (9) of the triṣṭubh section densely repeats and rings changes on the lexicon and thematics from the early parts of the hymn and thus signals a kind of ring composition. Verse 10 seems to announce the success of our petitions, though in a different lexicon. The final verse (11) is a refrain verse, repeated from I.100.19, the last half of which is the general Kutsa refrain.

1. I present this great visionary thought to you, the praiser of this great one, when the Holy Place [=the earth] has been anointed for you.
   The one victorious in his upsurging and his outsurging, Indra with his vast power did the gods cheer on.
2. His fame do the seven rivers bear; Heaven and Earth, the Broad One, (bear) his wondrous form, lovely to see.
   For us to look upon (it), to put our trust in (him), the Sun and Moon roam, traversing in regular alternation, o Indra.
3. Help this chariot forward to win, o bounteous one, which we will cheer on as victorious for you in the clash,
   and help us in the contest with your mind, much-praised Indra. Extend shelter to us who seek you, bounteous one.
4. Might we conquer their defense with you as yokemate. For us uphold our stake in every raid;
   for us, Indra, create wide space and easy passage. Break the bullish powers of our rivals, bounteous one.

5. As these peoples here, each for itself, in admiration are calling for you along with your help, o securer of prizes—
   mount our chariot, to win—because your mind, Indra, when it's settled, is victorious.
6. Cow-conquering are his two arms—he himself is of unmatched resolve, providing a hundred forms of help in every action, creating tumult.
   In the disorder (of battle) Indra is a match (for all) in his strength. So the peoples vie in invoking him when they wish to win.
7. Your fame reaches higher than a hundred, bounteous one, and even more—higher than a thousand among the separate peoples.
   The great (Earth), the Holy Place has sparked you who are matchless. So you keep smashing obstacles, you stronghold-splitter.
8. The (only) match for your strength has threefold divisions: it is the three earths, o lord of men, and the three luminous realms.
   You have grown beyond this whole world. You are without rival, Indra, by birth and from of old.
9. It is you we call upon first among the gods; you have become the one victorious in battles.
   Let him make this bard of ours fervid and effusive; let Indra put our chariot in front at the surging out.
10. You have conquered; you have not withheld prizes in the petty contests and in the great ones, bounteous one.
    You, the strong, we hone for help. So, Indra, spur us on in the challenges.
11. Let Indra always speak up for us. Not led astray, may we win the prize.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.103 Indra

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Like I.102, this hymn begins with a difficult verse, treating the two aspects of Indra's power, situated on earth and in heaven respectively. We can assume that the earthbound power has to do with the aid he provides to mortals in battle, while his heavenly power is displayed by his cosmogonic deeds. The poet claims the two types of power are mixed together equally and the result serves as a sort of beacon, an odd image—but the underlying notion must be that of the light (of Dawn, of Agni) that connects heaven and earth, frequently referred to as a beacon. Similarly Indra's twin powers link the heavenly and earthly realms and are conspicuous in both.

Both types of power are treated in the hymn, which has an omphalos structure. The cosmogonic deeds are found in the outer frame, verses 2 and 7 (and 8ab), particularly the slaying of Vr̥tra. The inner verses (3–6) concern Indra's involvement with us, the Āryas, as we confront our traditional foes, the Dāsas and the Dasyus, who do not share in the values of the Ārya community. The omphalos itself consists of verse 4, where Indra acquires several names marking his successful progress. The following verse (5) presents itself as a sort of epiphany: the people are exhorted to behold the results of Indra's actions and therefore believe in his existence. The omphalos structure is marked not only thematically but verbally. Note the two occurrences of *śrád-dhā* "trust" in the inner ring of verses 3 and 5.

The responsion in the outer ring (specifically vss. 2 and 7) is more complex and more interesting. Verse 2c begins with the signature formula of the Vr̥tra saga: *áhann áhim* "he slew the serpent," and 7b ends with the word *áhim* "serpent." The phrase in verse 2 lacks the frequent accompaniment, the weapon (*vájra*) in the instrumental "with his mace," while 7b has *vájreṇa. But* on the surface the action in that verse is entirely different: "he woke the sleeping serpent with his mace." As argued elsewhere (Jamison 1982/83 and 2007: 110–12), this is a formal "pun," which means exactly the opposite of its surface sense. Indra did not nudge the snake with his weapon to wake him up to fight. Instead the poet combines the formal causative shape of the verb "awaken" (lit., "cause to awaken") with the semantics of its object "sleeping (serpent)," to produce an underlying form "cause (the serpent) to sleep." In Vedic, as in English, "cause to sleep / put to sleep" is a euphemism for "kill," and "waken the sleeping serpent with the mace" is simply a particularly clever way to say "slew the serpent." Since this phrase is anticipated by the standard *áhann áhim* expression, which is in the structurally responsive position in the ring, an alert audience would have no trouble catching this deep-structure pun.

1. This highest Indrian power of yours did the sage poets hold fast earlier,
   (the one) far away and this one here—
   this one here on the earth and the other one of his in heaven. The one
   (part) is mingled (with the other) equally, like a beacon.
2. He held the earth fast and spread it out; having smashed with his mace,
   he sent forth the waters:
   He smashed the serpent; he split apart Rauhiṇa; he smashed the cobra—
   the bounteous one with his powers.
3. He who by nature provides support, being trusted for his power, roved
   widely, splitting apart the Dāsa strongholds.
   As knowing one, o possessor of the mace, cast your missile at the Dasyu;
   strengthen Ārya might and brilliance, o Indra.
4. This is for him who is accustomed to it. Bearing the name "bounteous," a
   name to be celebrated through these human generations,

the mace-bearer was advancing to smash the Dasyus when he took for himself the name "son (of strength)" for fame.

5. Look here at this abundant success of his; put your trust in the heroism of Indra.
   He found the cows; he found the horses; he the plants, he the waters, he the trees.
6. For the bullish bull of abundant action, for him whose bluster is real, we will press the soma,
   for him, the champion who, tearing them out like a highwayman, goes about distributing the possessions of the non-sacrificer.
7. This heroic deed you carried out, Indra—that you "awakened" the sleeping serpent with your mace, as it were.
   The wives [=waters?] and the birds [=Maruts?] applauded you who were roused to excitement; all the gods applauded you,
8. When, o Indra, you smashed Śuṣṇa who brings bad harvest, Pipru, and Vr̥tra and smashed apart the strongholds of Śambara.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.104 Indra

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh

At nine verses, this final hymn of the Kutsa Indra cycle is longer than its immediate predecessor by one verse. On this basis Oldenberg identified it as an Anhangslied (a supplementary hymn appended to the end of a divinity cycle), an opinion supported by the fact that, alone of the Kutsa hymns (I.94–98, 100–115), it lacks the Kutsa refrain always found in the last hemistich of the last verse of each hymn. (This applies only to trimeter hymns; the gāyatrī hymn I.97, not surprisingly, also lacks it.) But if "supplementary" suggests something attenuated or in decline, that suggestion is emphatically false. This hymn is extraordinary complex and challenging, especially in its mythological portion (vss. 3–5), and we are far from solving the many puzzles it presents. It may have been inserted just here in the Saṃhitā because the mythological portion in part concerns a foe named Kuyava, or the demon "of bad grain," that is, bad harvest, mentioned as having been slain by Indra in the last verse of the preceding hymn (I.103.8ab). There are also several other lexical connections between I.103 and this hymn, particularly the two forms of *śrád-dhā* "trust" in each hymn, which may have encouraged the insertion, or even the composition, of this supplementary poem.

As in many hymns, an invitation to Indra to come to the sacrifice is found in the first verse. But some of the features of this verse give us a taste of what is to

come. For example, the apparently straightforward simile in pāda b, rendered here as "like a steed sounding off," is actually a triple pun (impossible to convey in translation): the participle *s*^{u}*vānáḥ* can belong to three different verbs: "sound," "impel," and "press (of soma)." When Indra takes his seat on the ritual ground, he is compared to a horse neighing, to a horse that has been driven to the place where it takes its rest, and finally to soma (which itself is often compared to a horse) being pressed in *its* womb. In fact the same phraseology is applied to soma elsewhere (cf. IX.70.7).

The second verse introduces the theme that will dominate the mythological portion, the importance of having Indra and the other gods on our side in the battle against the traditional, perhaps indigenous, enemies of the Ārya, identified as Dāsa (vs. 2) and Dasyu (vs. 5). The word "color" in the final pāda of the verse is a frequent way of referring to a cohort, a unified group of people. Our urgent need for Indra and his aid returns after the mythological portion, in fact starting with the second half of verse 5. The poet twice asserts his trust in Indra's power (6d, 7a); this may not be a mere repetition but refer rather to the two aspects of Indra's power, as described in the first verse of the preceding hymn (I.103.1), partly in heaven and partly on earth. And he also issues a series of peremptory commands, especially negative commands, to Indra from verse 5ab through verse 8, which ends with a plea not to split our "eggs" or our "cups," in our opinion male and female genitalia respectively. The final verse (9) is again a simple invitation to soma.

The problematic verses 3–5ab need to be interpreted within this outer framework, the context of Indra's martial aid to the embattled Ārya. Our interpretation of these verses is quite speculative and differs from those of others, but we have attempted to construct a coherent account, while supplying as little extraneous material as possible. What is immediately striking about the first of these verses (3) is the presence of two female figures, the "two maidens of Kuyava," who are obviously rivers. More rivers appear in the second half of the next verse (4cd). Now the advance of the Ārya is often obstructed by rivers, which must be forded (see esp. III.33), and important battles are fought beside these barrier rivers (see esp. VII.18). The two maidens of Kuyava thus could be rivers initially controlled by forces impeding the progress of the Ārya. The charming image of the foamy rivers "bathing in milk" turns swiftly cruel: "may they both be smashed," perhaps a reference to their violent confluence with a mightier river still, the Śiphā (otherwise unknown). This verse reminds us of V.30.9, in another Indra hymn, in which Indra confronts an enemy who "made women his weapons" and who has two streams, perhaps the same rivers as here. Once Indra recognizes the situation, he initiates battle.

> V.30.9 Because the Dāsa made women his weapons, what can they do to me? His armies lack strength.
> Since he [=Indra] distinguished both his [=Dāsa's?] streams, therefore Indra advanced on the Dasyu to fight.

The point may be that though rivers are formidable natural obstructions, they are also, by grammatical gender, feminine, and females are, by nature, weak. Conceiving of rivers as women robs them of their power and allows them to be overcome. The analogue of Indra's distinguishing the streams in V.30.9 may be found in our verse 5ab, where the "guide" of the Dasyu, which we interpret both physically as the streambed and metaphorically as his strategy, is revealed. It is another female who reveals and recognizes it, and, on the basis of shared lexicon, we think that Dawn is the figure lurking behind this unidentified feminine. Dawn regularly makes things visible and knows the way forward, and here she leads the Aryan forces to the very seat of the enemy.

These Ārya forces are personified in Āyu in verse 4ab. His "navel" has been effaced for two reasons. On the one hand, the mythic hero Āyu is the son of the Apsaras Urvaśī and the mortal king Purūravas, but his lot was cast with mortals when his mother abandoned him (see X.95), and in this sense his true origins have been, at the least, muddied. But there is a more positive aspect to this phrase; since he and the other Ārya continue to move forward into ever new territory, where they came from recedes into the background: their future is forward.

What remains to be explained is the emphasis on the rivers' "carrying away" (*áva-√bhr̥* 3a, 3b; *√bhr̥* 4b). Here we feel there may be a latent ritual reference. The "final bath" (*avabhr̥thá*, a derivative of *áva-√bhr̥*) of the sacrificer and his wife at the end of the classical śrauta ritual is purificatory, removing all ritual pollution. And it is a commonplace in Vedic that rivers and moving waters in general carry away stain. The mention of bathing in 3c, combined with the emphasis on "carrying away," suggests that a notion of expiation and ritual cleansing has been superimposed on this battle scene. What is not clear is *what* is being carried away. Is it pollution produced by some offense of the enemy? An even more speculative idea is inspired by the mention of "foam" (*phénam* 3b): in a well-known myth Indra cuts off the head of the demon Namuci with the foam of waters (see VIII.14.13), having tricked him by forswearing all conventional weapons. It is possible that the rivers here are carrying away the defilement that Indra acquired from this underhanded killing. It is worthy of note that the Namuci myth is treated in V.30.7–8, right before the verse cited above about enemy streams.

The last word has not been said about this dense and fascinating hymn, but we hope to have advanced the discussion.

1. A womb has been prepared for you to sit down in, Indra. Sit down in it
   here, like a steed sounding off,
   once you have released your vitality [/the birds] and unhitched the horses,
   who convey you so well to the mealtime, evening and morning.
2. These men here have come to Indra for help. Even now, immediately, he
   should go to them along the roads.
   The gods will extinguish the battle-fury of the Dāsa. They will convey
   our "color" to welfare.

3. She who knows his [=Kuyava's?] will carries away by herself; (the other) by herself carries away the foam in her water.
   The two maidens of Kuyava bathe in milk: may they both be smashed in the torrent of the Śiphā (River).
4. The navel [=lineage, origin] of the Āyu to come has been effaced. He lengthens his life through the (dawns) in front. The champion reigns.
   The Añjasī, the Kuliśī, (the Sarasvatī) whose husband is the virile one— they, impelling the milk, carry it with their waters.
5. When that guide [=both riverbed and strategy] of the Dasyu was revealed, she who recognized it [=Dawn] went to his seat as if straight home.
   Now then, bounteous one, just grant us acclaim. Don't hand us over, like a careless man his bounties.
6. You, Indra—give us a share in the sun, in the waters, in blamelessness, in the praise of the living.
   Do no harm to our inner delight. Trust has been placed in your great Indrian power.
7. And, I think, trust has been placed in this (power) of yours right here. As bull, bestir yourself toward great stakes.
   Don't (put) us in an unprepared womb, o much invoked one. Indra, grant vitality and the pressing (of soma) to those who hunger for them.
8. Don't smite us, Indra; don't hand us over. Don't steal our dear delights.
   Don't split apart our "eggs," o bounteous and powerful one; don't split our "cups" along with their contents.
9. Come here nearby. They say you have lust for soma. Here it is, pressed: drink it, for exhilaration.
   Being of broad expanse, rain it into your belly. Like a father, hear us when you are being called on.

I.105 All Gods

Trita Āptya or Kutsa Āṅgirasa
19 verses: paṅkti, except mahābṛhatī 8, triṣṭubh 19

This famous hymn has been the victim of a range of unlikely interpretations; among them that it tells the story of "Trita in the Well" (so Geldner; for discussion of the verse on which this is based, see the introduction to I.106); that it is the lamentation of a sick man (so Oldenberg, *Noten*); that it is the complaint of a poet who's unemployed because his patron has died (so Bloomfield 1916: 114–15); or that it is a charm against a solar eclipse (so Lüders 1959: 576–78). The range and incompatibility of these hypotheses testify to the interpretive challenges of

the poem. Nonetheless, guided by the structure, we feel that we have arrived at an internally consistent and satisfying interpretation. (See also discussion in Jamison 2007: 82–85).

It is an omphalos hymn. It has nineteen verses, but the last verse is in a different meter from the rest and does not end with the refrain found in the other eighteen verses (but rather with the standard Kutsa refrain), so we can legitimately consider it extra-hymnic for structural purposes. The exact center of the hymn is then verses 9 and 10. As in a number of other omphalos hymns, they are responsive, beginning identically, with *amī́ yé* NUMERAL ("those which…"). Their content is, it seems, mystical—at any rate, it has provoked much scholarly discussion. Also as in other omphalos hymns a set of concentric verses surround this central pair. But its structure is even more intricate than most other omphalos hymns, in that there is also a certain forward progress in the hymn, held in tension with the architectonic symmetry of the omphalos structure.

The subject of the hymn is the poet's doubts and anxieties about the efficacy of the sacrifice and, in particular, of his own ritual speech and thus about the relationship between the earthly and heavenly realms, if that relationship exists at all. It is this central doubt that prompts the refrain "Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves." The poet wishes both Heaven and Earth to listen to and bear witness to what he says and thereby prove that there *is* a relationship between them, a relationship established and maintained by the sacrifice.

The poet begins with a happy picture of cosmic (vs. 1) and earthly (vs. 2) order, but he quickly turns to his fear about the maintenance of this order (vs. 3). He follows with a series of baffled questions to the gods, introduced by *pṛchāmi* "I ask." He first questions Agni, the divinity nearest to him, about the fate of his previous poems (his "truth"), and then turns to the gods in heaven to ask what happens in heaven to the sacrifice and the poetic formulations of mortals (vss. 5–6). These questions express almost a loss of faith in the efficacy of these mortal techniques to make contact with the gods. His anguish grows stronger in verses 7–8, where his painful thoughts are memorably compared to wolves, to cowives, and to mice gnawing their own tails.

There follows the pair of verses (9–10) we have just identified as the omphalos, which seem to constitute the oblique response to the poet's cry for reassurance—a cosmic vision in which the poet's connection and kinship with the distant heaven is manifest, and is attested to by what may be his forefather, the seer Trita Āptya. The precise nature of this vision is not clear to us, but it seems to involve celestial bodies and celestial movement. After this central mystery, the rest of the hymn seems designed to calm the worries expressed by the poet, in the reverse order of his first expression, by asserting divine participation in the mortal's ritual acts. In verse 11 a cosmic wolf is kept at bay, similar to the earthly, metaphorical one that pursued the poet in verse 7. In the following verses effective words are established anew (12); Agni takes charge of the sacrifice (13–14); Varuṇa produces poetic formulations (15); and the path to heaven and the relations between god and men are made safe (16–17).

Thus I.105 has two structures held in tension—one is the symmetrical architectural one of concentric rings of verses around a central pair, and the other is the forward movement of question and answer, worry expressed and reassurance given. The two structures can be diagrammed as follows:

Structure of I.105 (a): architectural:

1–2 cosmic and earthly order

3 fears about maintaining order

5–6 questions about fate of ritual offerings

7–8 more anguish; thoughts compared to wolves, cowives, mice

9–10 Omphalos: cosmic vision

11 wolf kept at bay

12 effective words reestablished

13–15 gods take charge of sacrifice

16–17 order restored

[18: structure destabilized? (see below)]

Structure of I.105 (b): forward movement:

1–8 poet's questions and worries
11–17 (gods') answers and reassurances

The intricacy of the responsive patterns and the tension between the two structures compel our attention and provide us with aesthetic satisfaction, even though we find ourselves puzzled by much of the actual content of the hymn. But there is a final sly trick that complicates the hymn even more. In the last verse (before the extra-hymnic one), the wolf returns—the wolf that tracked the poet in verse 7, but whose threat was curbed by divine power in verse 11. But it seems that that check was only temporary; the wolf comes back, enigmatically but with a lurking menace, in verse 18. Have the poet's fears been calmed after all? Has he really regained his faith in the efficacy of his own poetry and of the sacrifice they serve? Or will the wolf prey upon him again? The hymn leaves these questions open and in this way subtly and uninsistently undermines the reassuring structure of the poem and destabilizes its architecture. It is a masterful stroke.

1. The moon is here in the waters; the fine-feathered one [=sun] runs in heaven.
   They do not find your track, o lightning bolts with golden fellies.
   – Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.
2. Those with tasks (pursue) each his own task. The wife draws her husband to herself.

The two squeeze out the bullish milk; having surrendered, he milks out his sap [/having bound him about, she milks out his sap].
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

3. Let not, o gods, yonder sun fall down [/be miscarried] from heaven.
Let us never be in want of the beneficial somian (sap).
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

4. I ask the nearest one [=Agni] about my sacrifice. Will the messenger [=Agni] declare this:
Where has my earlier "truth" gone? Who bears it now?
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

5. You gods, who are yonder in the three luminous realms of heaven—
What is truth for you, what is untruth? Where is the age-old offering for you?
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

6. Is (the vision) of truth steadfast? Is the vision of Varuṇa (steadfast)?
Might we along the path of great Aryaman pass beyond those of evil intent?
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

7. I am one who used (always) to speak some (speeches) at the pressing.
But cares (now) pursue this same me, like a wolf a thirsting wild beast.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

8. They scorch me all about, like cowives, (like ailing) ribs.
Like mice their tails, the cares gnaw at me, your praiser, o you of a hundred resolves [=Indra].
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

9. The seven reins [=seers?] that are yonder—to there is my umbilical cord stretched.
Trita Āptya knows this. He rasps (witness) to the kinship.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

10. The five oxen that stand yonder in the middle of great heaven—
this is now to be proclaimed among the gods—they have turned back (toward home), directed toward a single end.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

11. These fine-feathered ones sit in the middle, on the stairway to heaven.
They keep away from the path the wolf that is overtaking the boisterous waters.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

12. Anew has this (speech) been established worthy to be spoken, good to proclaim, o gods.
The rivers stream truth; the sun stretches through the real.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

13. O Agni, it exists: this friendship of yours among the gods, worthy to be hymned.

Seated here, sacrifice to the gods for us as you did for Manu—as the one who knows better.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

14. Seated here as Hotar, as for Manu, (facing?) toward the gods, as the one who knows better,
Agni sweetens the oblations, the wise god among the gods.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

15. Varuṇa creates sacred formulations; we implore him as the finder of the way.
He opens up the thought in our heart. Let a newer truth be born.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

16. The path that is yonder, belonging to the Ādityas, made as something to be proclaimed in heaven—
it is not to be overstepped, o gods; o mortals, you do not (even) see it.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

17. Trita, set down in a well, calls upon the gods for help.
Bṛhaspati has heard this, making a broad (space) from narrowness.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

18. Because the reddish wolf has suddenly seen me going along the path,
he rears up on having noticed me, like a carpenter with a stitch in his side.
– Take heed of this (speech) of mine, you two world-halves.

19. With this song may we, with Indra on our side and possessing hale heroes, be preeminent in the community.
– This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.106 All Gods

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7

After the challenges and pyrotechnics of the previous hymn, this simple appeal for aid to a range of divinities comes as something of a relief. It is a hymn of the most straightforward All God type. The most notable feature of the hymn is verse 6, which closely parallels verse 17 of I.105. Here the poet Kutsa is "squeezed down into a pit" and appeals to the gods for help. There Trita is found in a similar situation and makes the same appeal. The verse conforms better to its context in this hymn than in I.105: in I.106 the refrain filling half of each verse calls on the gods to "rescue us from narrow straits," as exemplified by Kutsa's confinement, whereas in I.105 the poet is tormented by spiritual doubts that only in that one particular

verse are conceived of as physical confinement. It seems possible that I.105.17 was adapted from this hymn.

1. Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, the Maruts' troop, and Aditi do we call upon for help.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
2. O Ādityas, come here for our wholeness; o gods, become luck itself in the overcoming of obstacles.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
3. Let the Fathers help us, those good to proclaim, and the two goddesses [=Heaven and Earth], whose sons are the gods, strong through truth.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
4. Inciting the prizewinner Narāśaṃsa here—with appeals for grace we beg Pūṣan, who rules over heroes.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
5. O Bṛhaspati, make easy passage for us always. The luck and lifetime of yours that was set in place by Manu—that we beg for.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
6. Kutsa the seer, squeezed down into a pit, called on Indra, smasher of Vṛtra, lord of power, for help.
   – Like a chariot from a hard place, o good ones of good gifts, rescue us from all narrow straits.
7. Let goddess Aditi, with the gods, keep guard over us. Let the god Protector protect us, not keeping his distance.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.107 All Gods

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
3 verses: triṣṭubh

The first verse of this brief and elementary hymn continues the theme of "broad space out of narrowness" found in the refrain of the previous hymn.

1. The sacrifice goes toward the benevolence of the gods: o Ādityas, become compassionate.

Your benevolent thought, inclined our way, should turn you hither—that which will be excellent at finding a wide place even out of narrow straits.

2. Let the gods come close to us here with help, being praised with the melodies of the Aṅgirases.
   Indra with his Indrian powers, the Maruts with the Maruts, Aditi with the Ādityas will extend shelter to us.
3. In this of ours shall Indra take delight, in this shall Varuṇa, in this Agni, in this shall Aryaman, in this Savitar take delight.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.108 Indra and Agni

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
13 verses: triṣṭubh

For the ritual pairing of Indra and Agni, see the introduction to I.21. This hymn is structured by patterned repetition that becomes decidedly more restrictive in the second half of the hymn. The vocative of the dual dvandva "o Indra and Agni" occurs in every verse but the middle one (vs. 6). In the first five verses this vocative moves around the verse (though it always occurs in second position in its pāda), but in the second half (vss. 7–13) it always occurs in second position of the first pāda, after the subordinator *yád* "when" (except in the final verse [13], where it appears after *evā́* in the same position). The second half of these same verses (7–12) is a refrain, which has slowly been assembled in the earlier part of the hymn: its second half is also found in 1d and 6d, and in part in 5d; the end of its first half first appears in 6c. These elements all come together first in 7cd. And the first halves of these same verses are thematically superimposable: in each verse several different potential locations of the gods are listed, which they are urged to leave in order to come to us.

The contents of the first six verses are more various. The united front and the joint activities of Indra and Agni are emphasized, though some verses have a distinctly Indraic character (esp. vs. 3, where both gods are called "Vṛtra-smashers") and some are more in Agni's camp (esp. vs. 4). The middle verse (6) is, as noted above, the only verse without an address to the gods (or any mention of them by name), and it also contains 1st-person direct speech. In it the speaker recalls his words when he "chose" the gods, presumably as his priests, and these words announce the necessity for competing with others (in this case the other human "lords" [not, in our opinion, the nonhuman Asuras, the later Vedic opponents of the gods]) for the gods' visitation, the theme that will dominate the rest of the hymn. Though we hesitate to call verse 6 an omphalos, it does serve as pivot point for the

hymn, and its deliberately different structure from both what precedes and what follows marks it and its position as exceptional.

1. O Indra and Agni, the brightest chariot of yours, which looks upon all creatures,
   with that one drive here, standing together on the same chariot. Then drink of the pressed soma.
2. As great as this whole creation here is, deep and wide-spreading in its expanse,
   so great let this soma here be, for drinking—enough for you two, to your thinking, o Indra and Agni.
3. For you two made your own joint name auspicious, and you two, o Vr̥tra-smashers, are conjoined.
   O Indra and Agni, you bulls, having sat down jointly, drench yourselves in the bullish soma.
4. You two being anointed when the fires have been kindled, with your offering spoon extended, having strewn your own ritual grass,
   with the sharp soma drinks poured about, drive in our direction to (display) benevolence, o Indra and Agni.
5. O Indra and Agni, which manly deeds you two have done; which forms and bullish powers you have made your own;
   which age-old propitious partnerships are yours—with these, drink of the pressed soma.
6. Since I said first on choosing you two: "This soma here is to be invoked by us in competition with the (other human) lords,"
   toward this confidence (of ours) (which has) come true—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
7. When, o Indra and Agni, you are reaching exhilaration in your own dwelling, when at a brahmin's or at a king's, o you who deserve the sacrifice,
   from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
8. When, o Indra and Agni, you are among the Yadus, the Turvaśas, when among the Druhyus, the Anus, the Pūrus,
   from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
9. When, o Indra and Agni, you are on the lowest earth, on the middle one, and on the highest one,
   from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
10. When, o Indra and Agni, you are on the highest earth, on the middle one, and on the lowest one,
    from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
11. When, o Indra and Agni, you are in heaven, when on earth, when in the mountains, in the plants, in the waters,
    from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.

12. When, o Indra and Agni, at the rising of the sun in the middle of the heaven you bring yourselves to exhilaration by your own power,
    from there, bulls—yes! drive here. Then drink of the pressed soma.
13. Thus, o Indra and Agni, having drunk of the pressed soma, entirely conquer all rich prizes for us.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.109 Indra and Agni

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Dedicated to Indra and Agni like the preceding hymn, this one takes a livelier and less predictable course, characterized by a 1st-person voice. This voice announces in the first two verses that he seeks a better state and must turn to Indra and Agni for help because his kin-group is unreliable. This is expressed in general terms in the first verse, but in bitter particulars in the second. Interestingly the deficient relatives in that verse are both connections through the female line: his daughter's husband and his wife's brother (the word *syālá* is specialized for this relationship). In a patrilocal system like that of ancient India, neither of them would have particularly close ties to him.

The theme of kinship is continued in verse 3, where the forefathers, a more satisfactory set of relatives, provide the model for the performance of a soma sacrifice for Indra and Agni, the success of which seems to have been in doubt (see 3a). This soma sacrifice continues in verse 4, where the Aśvins, somewhat surprisingly, participate in its performance. Perhaps the idea is that even other gods, the Aśvins and the goddess Holy Place, do ritual service to the great Indra and Agni.

The subject gradually shifts to praise of the two gods' powers (vss. 5–6) and requests for their aid (vss. 7–8). In verse 7 the forefathers return, and the poet, rather indirectly, compares the sacrificial compact the gods had with these ancestors with the one he hopes he has established now.

1. Because, seeking a better state, I have surveyed with my mind my kith and kin, o Indra and Agni,
   there exists for me no other (fatherly) solicitude than you two. So I have fashioned for you a thought that seeks the prize.
2. Because I have heard of you two as better givers of abundance than a no-count son-in-law or brother-in-law—
   so with an offering of soma for you, o Indra and Agni, I beget a newer praise.

3. Crying in distress, "Let us not cut the reins," guiding themselves following the skills of the forefathers,
   the bulls bring about exhilaration for Indra and Agni—for the two (pressing) stones are in the lap of the Holy Place.
4. For you two, o Indra and Agni, for your exhilaration, the goddess, the Holy Place, eagerly presses the soma.
   You two, o Aśvins, with your auspicious hands and lovely palms—rinse it with honey, infuse it in the waters.
5. O Indra and Agni, I have heard of you as most powerful at the distribution of goods, at the smashing of obstacles.
   Having sat on the ritual grass at this sacrifice here, make yourselves exhilarated on the pressed soma, o you of extensive domains.
6. You extend beyond the bordered domains at the battle cries, you extend beyond earth and heaven,
   beyond the rivers, beyond the mountains in your greatness, beyond and over all other creatures, o Indra and Agni.
7. Bring it to the fore, ready your skill, you two with the mace in your arms. Help us, o Indra and Agni, with your skills.
   Here are the very rays of the sun with which our forefathers were in communion.
8. O stronghold-splitters with the mace in your hands, ready your skill. Help us, o Indra and Agni, in the raids.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.110 Ṛbhus

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5 and 9

The Ṛbhus are originally mortal craftsmen who achieved immortality because of a series of marvelous deeds. This hymn begins in the ritual here-and-now, where the Ṛbhus, already immortal, are offered their share of the sacrifice by the poet-sacrificer, who speaks in the 1st person. The story of their achievement is then begun in verse 2, with the Ṛbhus depicted as itinerant skilled workers, rather like the poet and his comrades (thus perhaps holding out the hope that immortality will come to them as well). The particular feats they accomplished are then recounted, with special emphasis on their turning Tvaṣṭar's single cup into four (vss. 3, 5), the others hurriedly covered in verse 8, interspersed with pleas for their favor.

1. My (ritual) work has been stretched out, and it is being stretched out again. My sweetest insight is being recited for a hymn.

Right here is the sea (of soma) belonging to the All Gods. Satiate yourselves together on the (soma) prepared with the *svāhā*-cry, o R̥bhus.

2. When, facing front, you shrewd ones went forth in search of your daily bread, kind of like my pals,
   o sons of Sudhanvan, after your fill of roaming you came to the house of Savitar the pious.
3. Then Savitar impelled you to immortality when you went to make Agohya heed.
   This very beaker, the drinking vessel of the lord [=Tvaṣṭar]—though it was single, you made it fourfold.
4. Toiling with labor, with surpassing skill, the cantors, though they were mortal, reached immortality.
   The sons of Sudhanvan, the R̥bhus, who have the sun as their eye, in a year became infused with insights.
5. Like a field with a sharp stick, the R̥bhus measured into parts the single cup, which was gaping—
   they who were crying in want at the praise-invocation, seeking highest fame among the immortals.
6. Let us pour an inspired thought with our know-how, like ghee with a ladle, for the men of the midspace.
   Those who by their surpassing skill followed (the way) of the father of this one, the R̥bhus mounted to their prize, the realm of heaven.
7. (One) R̥bhu is for us a newer Indra by his power; (another) R̥bhu is a good one by his goods, a giver by his prizes.
   With the help of you, o gods, on a favorable day may we stand up to the battle thrusts of those who don't press soma.
8. O R̥bhus, you carved out a cow from a hide; you sent the mother to join with her calf again.
   O sons of Sudhanvan, superior men, with your skillful work you made your two elderly parents young.
9. Aid us with prizes at the winning of prizes: o Indra, accompanied by the R̥bhus, break out bright benefit.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.111 R̥bhus

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

Unlike the preceding hymn, this one passes over the R̥bhus' marvelous achievements very quickly, in the first verse, in favor of appeals to those gods to use their

skills for our benefit (esp. vss. 2–3). The signature verb is √*takṣ* "fashion." In the final two verses (4–5) it opens out into a sort of All God hymn, with appeals first to Indra as master of the R̥bhus and then to other gods with little or no connection to the R̥bhus.

1. They fashioned the smooth-rolling chariot, working with their know-how; they fashioned the two fallow bays that convey Indra and bring bullish goods.
   They fashioned—the R̥bhus—for their parents youthful vigor; they fashioned for the calf a mother to stay by it.
2. For our sacrifice fashion R̥bhu-like vigor; for will, for skill (fashion) refreshment along with good offspring.
   So that we may dwell peacefully with a clan possessing hale heroes, you shall establish this Indrian strength for our troop.
3. Fashion winning for us, o R̥bhus, winning for our chariot, winning for our steed, o men.
   Might you bring to pass victorious winning for us always, conquering kin and non-kin in battles.
4. Indra, master of the R̥bhus, do I call upon for help, and the R̥bhus, the Vājas, the Maruts for soma-drinking.
   Both Mitra and Varuṇa now and both the Aśvins—let them impel us to winning, to insight, to victory.
5. Let R̥bhu sharpen winning for the taking; let Vāja, victorious in the clash, help us.
   – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.112 Aśvins (except Heaven and Earth 1a, Agni 1b)

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
25 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 24–25

This tightly structured hymn conforms to the list format frequently found in Aśvin hymns. A pāda-length refrain ends every verse but the last two (24–25), urging the Aśvins to come with the same forms of help they have used in past rescues and marvelous deeds. The first three quarters of each verse provides examples of said deeds; as often in Aśvin hymns, many of these involve little-known or unknown episodes and proper names of otherwise unidentified clients of the Aśvins, intermixed with allusions to myths and legends found at least glancingly elsewhere. This fast-moving catalogue occupies most of the hymn (starting especially with vs. 5, through vs. 23), and its effect is to convince the audience that, with so many helpful interventions behind them, the Aśvins will surely answer our calls for help, as finally articulated in vss. 24–25.

The beginning of the hymn (vss. 1–4), while the rhetorical pattern is still being established, is more difficult and more syntactically and conceptually dense. The climax of this portion of the hymn is verse 4, where the rhetorical pattern gets its full shape but the content has not yet settled into the litany that follows. The pervasive double meaning of verse 4 cannot be conveyed directly in translation, for each part of the verse, on the one hand, identifies an unnamed divinity associated with the early-morning sacrifice (Wind [Vāyu], Agni, and Soma) by characteristic epithets, while, on the other, all three descriptions are also appropriate to the Aśvins' chariot (already mentioned in vs. 2), on which they will make the journey constantly alluded to in the refrain.

1. I reverently invoke Heaven and Earth, to be first in their thought; (I reverently invoke) Agni and the very bright gharma drink, for (the Aśvins) to seek on their journey.
   Those with which you stimulate the decisive act in the match, for (us to gain) a share—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
2. For you two to give them, inexhaustible (gifts?), easy to carry, have mounted onto your chariot, as if onto an eloquent (vehicle) for thinking.
   Those with which you help (us) to seek insights at the cultic act—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
3. You two rule over these clans at the command of the divine, through the might of the immortal.
   Those with which you swell the uncalved cow, you superior men—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
4. Those through which the earth-encircler [=Wind] is distinguished in the might of his extension, through which he of two mothers [=Agni] is distinguished, transiting in his transits,
   through which the wide-gazing one [=Soma] became of triple thought—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
5. Those with which from the waters you raised up rasping Rebha, who was confined and bound, and raised up Vandana to see the sun,
   with which you helped Kaṇva desiring gain—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
6. Those with which you revived Antaka, languishing in foreign parts, with which unwavering ones you revived Bhujyu,
   with which you revive Karkandhu and Vayya—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
7. Those with which (you made) Śucanti gain the stakes, keeping good company, (with which you made) the heated pot comfortable for Atri,
   with which you helped Pr̥śnigu and Purukutsa—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
8. Those powers with which, o bulls, you (helped) the outcaste, made the blind to see, the lame to go,

with which you released the quail that had been swallowed—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

9. Those with which you revived the honeyed, inexhaustible river, with which you revived Vasiṣṭha, you unaging ones,
with which you helped Kutsa, Śrutarya, Narya—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

10. Those with which you revived Viśpalā, to pursue the way, to gain the stakes in the contest with a thousand battle-prizes,
with which you helped Vaśa Aśvya and Preṇi [?]—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

11. Those through which, o you of good drops, a cask streamed honey for Dīrghaśravas Auśija the merchant,
with which you helped Kakṣīvant the praiser—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

12. Those with which you swelled the Rasā (River) with a gush of water, with which you helped the horseless chariot to victory,
with which Triśoka drove up ruddy cows for himself—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

13. Those with which you drive around the sun in the distance and you helped Mandhātar [/the thinker] in (the battles for) lordship of lands,
with which you helped the inspired poet Bharadvāja—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

14. Those with which you helped the great Atithigva Kaśojū and Divodāsa at the smiting of Śambara,
with which you helped Trasadasyu at the stronghold splitting—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

15. Those with which you favor Vamra [/the ant], who drinks up, and Upastuta, with which you favor Kali, who acquired a wife,
with which you helped Vyaśva and Pr̥thi—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

16. Those with which, o superior men, you sought a way for Śayu, with which for Atri, with which for Manu long ago,
with which you drove the (cows?) of Śara for Syūmarśmi—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

17. Those with which Paṭharvan, with the might of his belly, shone like a fire laid and kindled, on his drive,
with which you help Śaryāta in (the contest) for great stakes—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

18. Those by which, o Aṅgiras, with your mind you two *find a way out and go to the forefront at the opening up of (the cave) flooding with cows,
with which you helped Manu the champion with refreshment—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.

19. Those with which you brought home wives for Vimada or with which you did your best to obtain the ruddy (cows),
    with which you brought Sudevī (as wife) [/divine favor] for Sudās—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
20. Those with which you become weal for the pious man, with which you aid Bhujyu, with which Adhrigu,
    (and make) (the woman) R̥tastubh comfortable and easy-bearing—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
21. With which you favor Kr̥śānu in shooting, with which you helped the steed of the youth in speed—
    you bring the dear honey that comes from the bees—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
22. Those with which you revive the superior man fighting for cattle at the conquering of men, at the winning of land and descendants,
    with which you help the chariots, with which the steeds—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
23. Those with which, o you of a hundred resolves, you promoted Kutsa Ārjuneya, promoted Turvīti and Dabhīti,
    with which you helped Dhvasanti and Puruṣanti—with those forms of help come here, o Aśvins.
24. Make speech fruitful for us, o Aśvins; make for us inspired thought, o wondrous bulls.
    I call you down for help at a time when one shouldn't gamble. Be there to strengthen us at the winning of prizes.
25. Through the days, through the nights protect us all around, o Aśvins, with your blessings that can come to no harm.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.113 Dawn (except Dawn and Night 1cd)

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
20 verses: triṣṭubh

Dawn often brings out the best in R̥gvedic poets, and this hymn is no exception. It consists of separate groups of thematically unified verses without seeming disjointed, because there is an overall theme: unity amid diversity.

In the first three verses Dawn is contrasted with her opposite number, her sister Night, but they are eternally conjoined and regularly alternating according to the divine plan. Verses 4–6, marked off by a pāda-length refrain, present the diversity of the animate world. Dawn wakes all creatures, and they all have different goals to pursue in their waking lives, while all being subject to Dawn. Verse 7 provides both summary and transition; it almost sounds like a hymn-final verse.

The substantial middle section of the hymn (vss. 8–15) sees a different kind of unity in diversity, in what is perhaps the most challenging conceptual question about dawn. Every day has a dawn and every day's dawn is, in some sense, the same, while being quite distinct. Today's dawn has been preceded by countless many and will be followed by countless many; she is both last and first. But she is also the capitalized and personified single Dawn. This conceptual puzzle is presented in verse 8 (especially the first half), and the gist and lexicon of 8ab are repeated in the final verse of this section, 15cd, forming a ring around the section. The most difficult verse in the hymn, verse 10, also treats this same problem, and the next verse (11) draws the melancholy conclusion: just as there were earlier dawns, now gone, so were there earlier mortals who saw those dawns—and others will follow and replace us, to see the dawns to come. Verse 13 provides indirect solace, by reframing the many dawns as one Dawn, who dawned before, dawns now, and will continue to dawn. (The other verses in this section, 9, 12, and 14, simply concern the current Dawn, in fairly standard terms.)

The final section (vss. 16–20) begins (vs. 16) with a triumphal exhortation, which indirectly counters the consciousness of inevitable death attending on time stated in verse 11 with the announcement that life is lengthened by the advent of dawn. The following verses treat the early-morning ritual: the response of the sacrificial fire (vs. 17), the offering to Vāyu (vs. 18), the recitation and singing of praise (vss. 17–18), and, of course, the gifts that are distributed at the dawn sacrifice by Dawn herself (vss. 17–20).

1. This fairest light of lights has come here. The bright sign, wide-reaching, has been born.
   Just as she [=Dawn] is impelled forth for the impulsion of Savitar, so Night has left behind the womb for Dawn.
2. Having a gleaming calf, herself gleaming white, she has come here. The black one [=Night] has left behind her seats for her.
   Having the same (kin-)bonds, immortal, following one upon the other, the two, Day (and Night), keep exchanging their color.
3. The road is the same for the two sisters—unending. They proceed on it, one after the other, commanded by the gods.
   They do not oppose each other, nor do they stand still, though well grounded—Night and Dawn, of like mind but different form.
4. Light-filled leader of liberalities, the bright one has appeared. She has opened out the doors for us.
   Having stirred forth the moving world, she has looked out for riches for us. – Dawn has awakened all the creatures.
5. The bounteous one (has awakened them), for (even) one who lies crossways to move, for (another) one to seek wealth to his use,
   for (even) those who see (only) a little to gaze out widely. – Dawn has awakened all the creatures.

6. (She has awakened) one for dominion, another for fame, another to seek greatness, another to go to whatever his goal.
   Living being are not alike in what they have in view. – Dawn has awakened all the creatures.
7. This Daughter of Heaven has appeared opposite, dawning forth, the youthful one with gleaming garment.
   Holding sway over every earthly good, o well-portioned Dawn, dawn forth here today.
8. She follows the troop of those who go away; she is the first of those who, one by one, come hither—
   Dawn, as she dawns forth, rousing up (every) living being, but awakening no dead one at all.
9. Dawn, since you have caused the fire to be kindled, since you have shone forth with the eye of the sun,
   since you have awakened the sons of Manu who are about to sacrifice, so you have made for yourself good profit among the gods.
10. How long (will it be) until she will be together with those who (previously) dawned forth and those who will dawn forth now?
    Bellowing, she yearns after the early ones; thinking ahead, she goes at pleasure with the others.
11. They have gone, the mortals who saw the earlier dawn dawning forth.
    (This dawn) has now come to be gazed upon by us. And there are those coming hither who will see (the dawn) in the future.
12. Keeping away hatred, guardian of truth, born in truth, gracious, arousing liberalities,
    of good omen, bringing to birth (our ritual) pursuit of the gods—here today, Dawn, as the most fairest, dawn forth.
13. Over and over in the past the goddess Dawn dawned forth. And today she has dawned forth here, the bounteous one.
    And she will dawn forth through later days. Unaging, immortal, she proceeds according to her own customs.
14. She has flashed forth with her ornaments at the doorposts of heaven. The goddess has removed the black raiment.
    Awakening (the world), with her ruddy horses, Dawn drives hither with a well-yoked chariot.
15. Conveying hither flourishing valuables, she makes herself a bright beacon, showing herself ever more brightly.
    The last of those who, one by one, have gone, the first of those radiating forth—Dawn has whitened widely.
16. Raise yourselves up! The living life-force has come here to us. Away, forth has gone the darkness; light comes hither.
    She has left a path for the sun to drive on. We have come to where they lengthen lifetime.

17. With reins of speech the conveyor (of oblations), the hoarse-voiced (singer) [=Agni], himself being praised, arouses the radiant dawns.
 Today then, o bounteous one, dawn for the one who sings; for us shine down a lifetime full of offspring.
18. The dawns, bringing cows and hale heroes, who dawn forth for the pious mortal
 when the litany of liberalities is raised like (the litany) of Vāyu—to them, the givers of horses, shall the soma-presser attain.
19. Mother of gods, face of Aditi, beacon of the sacrifice, lofty—shine forth.
 As creator of lauds, dawn forth for our sacred formulation. Beget (it) here among our people, o you who bring all valuables.
20. The bright profit that the dawns convey to the laboring sacrificer—the auspicious thing—
 – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.114 Rudra

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10–11

A simple but pleasing hymn, characterized by considerable chaining and intertwining of repeated vocabulary and syntactic structures. The helpful and healing aspects of Rudra are emphasized—the related words *sumatí* "benevolence" and *sumná* "favor" occur six times in this eleven-verse hymn. His fearsome and angry side is for the most part downplayed, mentioned in passing in verses 4c and 10a, both beginning "in the distance." But Rudra's possible punitive actions are addressed directly in verses 7–8, which contain twelve occurrences of the prohibitive negative *mā́* "don't!"

1. These poetic thoughts do we proffer to Rudra, the powerful one with braided hair who rules over heroes,
 so that he will be luck for our two-footed and four-footed, so that everything in this settlement will be flourishing, free of affliction.
2. Be merciful to us, Rudra, and create joy for us. To you who rule over heroes we would do honor with reverence.
 Whatever luck and lifetime Father Manu won through sacrifice, that may we attain under your guidance, Rudra.
3. May we attain your benevolence though sacrifice to the gods, the benevolence of you who rule over heroes, o reward-granting Rudra.
 Bestowing only favor, come roaming toward our clans: possessing heroes who cannot be harmed, we will pour you an oblation.

4. We call down turbulent Rudra for help, the wandering poet who brings the sacrifice to success.
   In the distance from us let him shoot his divine anger. It is just his benevolence we choose.
5. We call down with reverence the boar of heaven, flame-red, with braided hair, turbulent in form.
   Bearing in his hand desirable healing remedies, he will extend shelter, covering, and protection to us.
6. This speech here is spoken to the father of the Maruts—speech sweeter than sweet, strengthening to Rudra.
   Both grant us, immortal one, what nourishes mortals, and be merciful to our selves, to our progeny and posterity.
7. Not the great one among us nor the wee little one, not the growing one among us nor the grown—
   don't smite our father nor our mother. Don't harm our own dear bodies, Rudra.
8. Don't do harm to our progeny and posterity nor to our (own) lifespan, not to our cows nor to our horses.
   Don't smite our heroes, Rudra, when enraged. We, with our oblations, will always invoke you.
9. Like a cowherd, I have driven these praises close to you. Grant your favor to us, father of the Maruts,
   for your benevolence is auspicious, most merciful. It is just your aid that we choose.
10. In the distance be your cow-smiting and men-smiting (anger). You who rule over heroes, let your favor be on us.
    Both be merciful to us and speak on our behalf, o god, and then extend double-lofty shelter to us.
11. We have spoken reverence to him, seeking his aid. Let Rudra, accompanied by the Maruts, hear our call.
    – This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

I.115 Sūrya

Kutsa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: triṣṭubh

As in most hymns and verses dedicated to Sūrya, the Sun, this hymn focuses on his rising. His function as eye of the gods, especially Mitra and Varuṇa, is mentioned in verse 1 (and in our opinion also in verse 5), and the activity that his rising inspires, both ritual and mundane, in verse 3. Verses 4 and 5 are more

enigmatic and have occasioned much discussion: many scholars believe that both verses contrast the sun of the day with the "night sun," the dark side of the sun that, in the form of a wheel, travels invisibly from west to east to position itself for the next daily rising. Thus, in such interpretations, in the first half of verse 4 Night gathers up the dark garment she was weaving (see II.38.4) at the advent of the rising sun, but swathes the night sun in her garment in the second half of the verse. Two sides of the sun, bright and dark, are also referred to, more clearly, in the second half of verse 5. Although these interpretations have much in their favor, we still remain uncertain about what verses 4 and 5 are actually depicting. On the one hand, the interpretations offered seem too cut-and-dried for the fluid cosmology of the Ṛgveda; on the other, given the usual concentration on the happy event of sunrise, too much mention of the less auspicious night sun seems somewhat out of place.

1. The brilliant face of the gods has arisen, the eye of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni;
   he has filled heaven, earth, and the space between: the Sun is the life-breath of both the moving and the still.
2. The Sun approaches the gleaming goddess Dawn from behind, like a dashing youth a maiden,
   when the men seeking the gods stretch their yokes across, in response to the auspicious (god) for the sake of an auspicious (thing).
3. The auspicious tawny horses of the Sun—the brilliant ones, worth cheering on, that win dappled cows—
   bringing reverence, they have mounted the back of heaven. They circle around heaven and earth in a single day.
4. This is the Sun's divinity, this his greatness: in the middle of (her) work (Night?) has gathered together what was stretched out.
   When he has yoked his tawny horses from their seat, just after that Night stretches her garment for him.
5. The Sun takes on his own form in the lap of heaven, for Mitra and Varuṇa to see.
   His one surface, gleaming, is unbounded; the tawny (horses) together bring the other, the black one.
6. Today, o gods, at the rising of the Sun, deliver us from distress and from disgrace.
   – This let Mitra and Varuıa grant to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa, the son of Dīrghatamas (poet of I.140–164), is the poet of the next eleven hymns (116–126). As Geldner points out, however, Kakṣīvant refers to himself as *pajriyá* (I.116.7, 117.6, 120.5) and to his family as the *pajrā́ḥ* (I.122.8, 126. 4, 5). According to I.121.13 the Pajras are Aṅgirases. Kakṣīvant also

calls himself the son of Uśij in I.119.9 and 122.4; Sāyaṇa identifies Uśij as a *dāsī*, a servant woman.

Whatever his family affiliations Kakṣīvant has one of the most distinctive poetic personalities in the R̥gveda. He is a very skillful, self-conscious, and tricky artist, setting traps for his unwary hearers and twisting words and phrases into often impenetrable knots, with an exuberance that we have to admire despite our frequent frustrations. He also has clear thematic preoccupations. Approximately half of his oeuvre is devoted to the Aśvins (116–120), with important catalogues of their deeds and services. (Much of what we know or surmise about the mythology of the Aśvins comes from these hymns.) He is also particularly interested in women in all their aspects: there are important and high-style treatments of the marriage of Sūryā and the Aśvins' wooing of her, as well as two lovely Dawn hymns (123–124) sketching a range of female roles, but there is also a nearly obscene celebration of a girl he received as a gift from his patron (126.6–7) that presses the boundaries of R̥gvedic decorum.

Because so much of Kakṣīvant's artistry is bound up with his manipulation of the Sanskrit language even at the phonological level, the special flavor of his poetry is particularly hard to convey in translation, unfortunately.

I.116 Aśvins

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
25 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a catalogue that mentions many stories in which the Aśvins came to the rescue of those in need but that provides little detail. There is some thematic linkage among the narratives, which in three instances occur in sets of four. So, for example, the hymn begins with references to the Aśvins' chariot or chariots and to the chariot-animals in verses 1–4 and then returns to them once again not quite at the end but toward the end, in verses 17–20. Verses 13–16 contain a set of stories involving body parts: the hands of the Aśvins in verse 13, the mouth of the wolf in 14, the foot of a mare in 15, and the eyes of R̥jrāśva in 16. Elsewhere the poet repeatedly returns to references to waters or liquids (vss. 3, 5, 7, 9). Such linked verses do not structure the hymn tightly, but they keep it from becoming merely a list of great deeds.

The Aśvins are closely associated with the Pravargya, originally an independent rite that was incorporated into the classical soma ritual either during the *upasad*-days that precede the soma-pressing day or on the pressing day itself. In this rite milk is poured into a heated pot and offered to the Aśvins. This hymn explicitly refers to the Pravargya rite in the first verse, which employs the marked verb *prá vr̥ñje*, which gave the Pravargya its name. The verb describes either placing the Pravargya pot on the fire or turning the pot to offer the milk. In the penultimate verse, the poet frames

the hymn by an indirect reference to the Pravargya by describing Rebha as "having twisted" (*právr̥kta*) in the water.

Many of the deeds alluded to in this hymn are likewise mentioned in the following four Aśvin hymns (I.117–20), especially the first two, often in the same or similar phraseology.

1. I twist (the milk-pot) as (one twists) the ritual grass and I stir up the praise songs, like winds the rain clouds, for the Nāsatyas,
   who have carried a wife down to our little Vimada with their chariot that is swift as a weapon,
2. As they were exulting in their firm-winged, swiftly speeding (steeds) or in the gods' spur.
   Then, o Nāsatyas, a donkey [=Vimada?] conquered the thousand at stake in the contest of Yama.
3. Tugra left Bhujyu behind in a cloud of water, Aśvins, as one who has died (leaves behind) his wealth.
   You carried him with your breathing ships [=winged steeds] that bob in the midspace far from water.
4. Through three nights and through three days, o Nāsatyas, you carried Bhujyu with your winged ones that wander far beyond:
   (you carried him) on the wasteland of the sea, at the far shore of the watery (sea), with your three chariots with their hundred feet and six horses.
5. Then you two acted as heroes upon the unsupporting sea, which has no place to stand and nothing to grasp,
   when, Aśvins, you carried Bhujyu home after he mounted your ship of a hundred oars.
6. O Aśvins, the white horse that you gave to (Pedu), whose horse was bad, to be everlasting well-being (for him)—
   that great gift of yours is to be famed. The racehorse of Pedu is ever to be called upon by the stranger.
7. O men, you two dug out plentifulness for Pajra's son, Kakṣīvant, who was praising you.
   You poured from the filter, the hoof of the bull-like horse, a hundred pots of liquor.
8. With snow you two kept away fire and scorching heat. You placed the nourishment of solid food for him.
   You brought Atri up to well-being, who had been brought down into the earth cleft together with his whole band.
9. You pushed the well far away, Nāsatyas; you put it bottom up, with its banks [=rim] aslant.
   Like waters for drinking they [=inspirations] flowed, for wealth to the thirsting thousand (descendants [?]) of Gotama.

10. And, Nāsatyas, from Cyavāna, who had become old, you removed his covering [=aged skin] like a garment.
    You extended the lifetime of him who was left behind, wondrous ones, and thereby you made him the husband of young women.
11. O men, that is your protective cover to be praised and brought to realization, o Nāsatyas,
    when you knowing ones dug (him) [=Vandana] out because he was beautiful, like a treasure that had been hidden away, for the sake of Vandana [/for you to be celebrated].
12. O men, I disclose that powerful, wondrous might of yours, like thunder the rain, in order to win it,
    as when Dadhyañc son of Atharvan (disclosed) the honey to you by means of the head of a horse when he proclaimed it.
13. Puraṃdhi has called upon your two hands again and again, o Nāsatyas, you of many delights [/of many arms], for what is great on your journey.
    You two heard (the call) of Vadhrimatī like a command. You gave (her a son) with golden hands.
14. At the critical moment you two freed the quail-hen from the mouth of the wolf, men, Nāsatyas,
    and, you two of many delights, you made the lamenting sage poet [=Uśanā Kāvya] to gaze far.
15. Because her foot was cut away like the wing of a bird, in the contest of Khela, at the decisive turn,
    right away you inserted a metal shank for Viśpalā to run, when the stake had been set.
16. R̥jrāśva, who butchered a hundred sheep for the she-wolf—him did his father blind.
    You placed two eyes in the unassailable one for him to gaze afar, o Nāsatyas, you wondrous healers.
17. The Daughter of the Sun mounted your chariot, like one winning the finish-line with her steed.
    All the gods approved in their hearts, and, Nāsatyas, you two keep company with her splendor.
18. When you two drove the course for Divodāsa and for Bharadvāja, Aśvins, urging (your steeds) onward,
    your accompanying chariot conveyed wealth. A bull and a river dolphin were yoked (to it).
19. Conveying wealth with good rule and a full lifetime with good descendants and good men, Nāsatyas,
    you two of one mind journeyed here with the prizes of victory to the wife of Jahnu, who was setting your portion three times a day.

20. At night you conveyed Jāhuṣa, besieged from every direction, through the easily traversed airy spaces.
    With your chariot that cuts asunder, o never-aging Nāsatyas, you journeyed through the mountains.
21. At the dawning of a single (dawn), Aśvins, you gave Vaśa the help (needed) for the battle in order for him to gain thousands (of cattle).
    Along with Indra you two smashed misfortunes and hostilities away from Pṛthuśravas, o bulls.
22. From the (dry [?]) well also of Śara, son of Ṛcatka, you supplied water (flowing) upward from below for him to drink.
    Also for starving Śayu, o Nāsatyas, with your powers you made his sterile cow swell (with milk).
23. To Viśvaka Kṛṣṇiya, who was seeking your help and singing your praise, who was aiming straight, Nāsatyas, you gave by your powers
    Viṣṇāpū to be seen (once more), like a lost animal.
24. Within the waters through ten nights and nine days, bound and pierced by the malicious one,
    Rebha, who bobbed and twisted in the water—him you two brought up, like soma with a ladle.
25. I have proclaimed your wondrous deeds, Aśvins. Having good cows and good men, might I be the lord of this (wealth).
    And both seeing and reaching a long lifetime, might I go to old age as if (going) home.

I.117 Aśvins

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
25 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a catalogue of the heroic deeds of the Aśvins, which ultimately leads to the poet's request for heroes (vs. 25). The problem for the poet is that such a hymn listing so many of the gods' deeds could easily become just an inventory without any real coherence. One of the poet's solutions to this problem is to create verbal and thematic linkages among verses and sets of verses in order to organize and unify his composition.

At the highest level the great deeds of the Aśvins are arranged according to theme. First are deeds in which the Aśvins rescue those who have been hidden away in some fashion: Atri in the earth cleft (3), Rebha in the waters (4), and Vandana in the ground (5). Then, the poet shifts from the Aśvins' rescues to their generosity. The theme is announced in verse 6 and then exemplified in verses 7–9. The Aśvins give the gift of a wife (7ab) and husband (7cd), a bright body (8ab), fame (8cd), and a horse (9). Verse 10 then summarizes this theme and announces a new one

that extends the image of the horse in verse 9. The deeds in the next section turn on the Aśvins as charioteers and horsemen. They bring prizes to the poet (11ab) and restore the racing mare Viśpalā (11d). Verses 12–16 connect the Aśvins' deeds to the journeys of their chariot and horses. On those journeys they come to the aid of Cyavāna, Bhujyu, and others. The last extended set of verses, verses 16–22, describe a variety of different acts, but all these verses mention animals: a quail (16), sheep and a she-wolf (17–18), a barren cow (20), a "wolf" (possibly a plow; 21), and the head of a horse (22). This leaves aside verse 19, but the "lame one" here is probably the mare Viśpalā, one suggestion of Sāyaṇa. Note that the last two sets of verses overlap at verse 16, a join that again helps hold the poem together.

Another way the poet creates a sense of unity is by the repetition of lexical items, sometimes used in different contexts. So, the poet uses the unusual verb *sám* √*rī* "draw back together" in verses 4, 11, and 19 to describe a rescue from the sea, the repair of a horse, and the healing of the "lame one." Or again, the Aśvins carried down (*ní…ūhathuḥ*) a horse or a bride (9b, 20d) and carried Bhujyu out (*níḥ…ūhathuḥ*) of the sea (14d, 15c). In 5c *níkhāta* "buried" describes Vandana; *níkhāta* occurs again in 12c, although it is not clear to whom the latter verse refers. Sāyaṇa suggests that it is Rebha, who was "buried" in the waters, an interpretation supported by the reference to the tenth day (cf. I.116.24). However, since the verb *níkhāta* was just used with Vandana in verse 5cd, it may be he to whom the verse refers.

Likewise, the poet links consecutive verses by repeating the same or similar words. The Aśvins rescue the seer (*ŕ̥ṣi*) Atri in 3a and the seer Rebha in 4b. Each of verses 20–22 addresses the *aśvinā* and the "wondrous ones" (*dasrā*/*dasrau*). The four hemistichs of verses 13 and 14 all begin with *yuvóḥ* or *yuvám*. Verses 15 and 16 both begin *ájohavīt* "he called again and again." Such verbal concatenation again helps unify the diverse contents of the hymn.

The poet explores other kinds of verbal play, some of which create interconnections within the poem, but others reflect other purposes or simply his artistry as a poet. For example, *víṣakta* "drooping" of 20a is phonologically rearranged in 24c as the rare word *víkasta* "split apart." There appears to be another phonological connection in verse 16cd between *viṣvā́c*, the personal name Viṣvāc, which may mean the "Double-Talker," and *viṣá* "poison." However, the interpretation of this hemistich is problematic, in part because Viṣvāc and his son are only attested here. Geldner and others understand the poison to be the means by which the Aśvins destroy the son of Viṣvāc, but if so, such use of poison by the Aśvins is isolated. Rather, the poison may have given rise to the son of Viṣvāc, an interpretation supported by the phonological similarity of *viṣvā́c* and *viṣá*. Perhaps the idea is that Viṣvāc's son is born from the "poison" of his "double-talking" speech.

1. The age-old Hotar [=Agni] seeks to win you in order for you to be
 exhilarated on the honeyed soma, o Aśvins.
 The gift accompanied by the ritual grass is laid out, (as is) my song. With
 refreshment, with prizes of victory, journey here, o Nāsatyas.

2. Your chariot, o Aśvins, swifter than mind, drawn by good horses, comes to the clans.
   By which (chariot) you go to the home of the good ritual performer, by that, o men, travel your course to us.
3. You free Atri, the seer of the five peoples, from narrow straits, from the earth cleft along with his band, o men—
   confounding the wiles of the merciless Dasyu, driving them out, one after another, o bulls.
4. O Aśvins—you men, you bulls—by your wondrous powers you draw back together the seer Rebha, who bobbed away in the waters,
   like a horse hidden by those of evil ways. Your ancient deeds do not grow old.
5. Like one who has gone to sleep in the lap of destruction, like the sun dwelling in darkness, o wondrous ones,
   like a buried gem, lovely to see, (dug out) for beauty, you dug him [=Vandana] out for Vandana [/for our celebration of you], o Aśvins.
6. This (deed) of yours in your earth-encircling course, o men, deserves to be praised by Kakṣīvant, the son of Pajra, o Nāsatyas:
   from the hoof of your prizewinning horse, you poured a hundred pots of honey for the people.
7. You two, o men, gave Viṣṇāpū to Viśvaka Kr̥ṣṇiya, who was praising you.
   Even to Ghoṣā, living at home with her father, you gave a husband, though she was growing old, Aśvins.
8. You two gave a bright (body) to Śyāva Kaṇva [/Kaṇva, the Dark One] of the great flood [?], Aśvins.
   That deed of yours is to be proclaimed, o bulls: that you bestowed fame upon the son of Nr̥ṣad [=Kaṇva].
9. Assuming many forms, Aśvins, you carried down a swift horse to Pedu,
   an unstoppable prizewinning horse that gains a thousand (cows), a smasher of serpents, deserving to be famed as the surpassing one.
10. These things deserving to be famed are for you, o you who give good gifts: the formulation, the song, the seat within the two world-halves.
    When the Pajras call you, Aśvins, travel with refreshment and toward victory's prize for the knowing one!
11. Being sung by Sūnor Māna [=Agastya], o energetic Aśvins, digging out victory's prize for the inspired poet,
    and growing strong alongside Agastya through his poetic formulation, you draw Viśpalā back together, Nāsatyas.
12. Journeying where?—Toward the good praise of (Uśanā) Kāvya? To a bed, o sons of heaven, o bulls?—
    you dug out the one who was buried like a tub of gold on the tenth day, Aśvins.

13. You, o Aśvins, made the aging Cyavāna a youth again through your powers.
Your chariot did the Daughter of the Sun choose, Nāsatyas, together with its splendor.
14. You turned your minds again to Tugra in your ancient ways, o youthful ones.
You carried Bhujyu from the flood, from the sea, with your birds, your silvery horses.
15. Carried forth into the sea, the son of Tugra [=Bhujyu] called upon you again and again, having gone (to you) on an unwavering course, Aśvins.
You carried him out with your chariot, swift as mind, with its good team, o bulls, to keep him well.
16. The quail-hen called upon you again and again, Aśvins, so that you freed her from the mouth of the wolf.
With your victorious (chariot) you journeyed across the back of the rock. You crushed the (son) of Viṣvāc [=the Double-Talker?], born by poison.
17. Him who had readied a hundred sheep for the she-wolf, who was led forth into darkness by his merciless father—
in R̥jrāśva you put eyes; you made light for the blind one to see.
18. O Aśvins, you bulls, that she-wolf summoned good fortune and the winner's stake for the blind man, saying, "O men!
Like the lover of a maiden is R̥jrāśva (to me), since he butchered a hundred and one sheep."
19. Great is your help, a joy itself, o Aśvins. Even the lame one do you draw back together, o holy ones.
And so Plenty called upon just you two, and you two came to her with your help, o bulls.
20. Wondrous Aśvins, you made the drooping, barren cow, no milk-cow, to swell (with milk) for Śayu.
By your powers you carried down to Vimada a wife, the maiden of Purumitra.
21. O Aśvins, wondrous ones, scattering barley by a "wolf" [=a drill plow?], milking out refreshment for the race of Manu,
blasting sound at the Dasyu with a bagpipe, you made wide light for the Ārya.
22. For Dadhyañc, the son of Atharvan, you substituted the head of a horse, Aśvins.
Speaking the truth, he proclaimed to you Tvaṣṭar's honey, which was hidden from you, o wondrous ones.
23. Always, o poets, I delight in your favor. Help all my insights, Aśvins.
Give us lofty wealth bringing descendants and worthy of fame, o Nāsatyas.
24. Giving Hiraṇyahasta [the Gold-Handed One], o Aśvins, you granted him as a son to Vadhrimatī [She Who Has a Steer (for a Husband)], o men.

Your raised up Śyāva [the Dark One], who had been split apart in three places, so that he might live, o Aśvins, who bring good gifts.

25. The sons of Āyu have proclaimed these your ancient heroic deeds, o Aśvins,
creating for you a poetic formulation, o bulls. Obtaining good heroes, we would announce the ritual distribution.

I.118 Aśvins

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The structure of the hymn is straightforward. It begins with an invitation to the Aśvins to come to the sacrifice on their chariot. Indeed, it is their chariot that is the focus of the poet's attention through most of the first half of the poem. The triplets associated with the chariot—its three chariot boxes (vss. 1–2), three wheels (2), and three turnings (2)—suggest the sacrifice itself with its three soma offerings. Within the poem, therefore, the ritual performance thus becomes an image of the Aśvins' chariot, and its realization a sign of the arrival of the Aśvins. The chariot not only brings the Aśvins to the sacrifice but it also brings help to the sacrificer (vs. 1). Ancient poets have told of the help of the Aśvins (3cd), and the second part of the poem (vss. 5–9) begins with a recital of the many men and even animals in their many desperate situations whom the Aśvins have helped. The hymn then returns to the poet's own need for help (vs. 10), and in verse 11 there is once again a summons of the Aśvins. The last verse creates a formal ring, for just as in verse 1 the Aśvins should come quickly in their "falcon-winged chariot" (*ráthaḥ*... *śyenápatvā*), so in verse 11 the Aśvins should come with the "fresh speed of a falcon" (*śyenásya jávasā nū́tanena*).

1. Aśvins, let your falcon-winged chariot journey here toward us—filled with compassion, filled with help—
which is swifter than a mortal's thought, which has three chariot boxes and the speed of the wind, o bulls.
2. Journey toward us by your smooth-turning chariot with its three chariot boxes, with its three wheels, and three turnings.
Swell the cattle (with milk), quicken the chargers, and strengthen the hero for us, o Aśvins.
3. Racing headlong by your smooth-turning chariot, wondrous ones, hear this signal-call of the stone.
Have not the inspired poets born long ago said that you are the first to respond to trouble, Aśvins?
4. Aśvins, let the swift, soaring falcons harnessed to your chariot carry you here—

those that, crossing the waters high in the heavens like vultures, carry you to (our offered) enjoyment.

5. Having become pleased, the young girl, the Daughter of the Sun, has now mounted your chariot, o men.
   Let the soaring horses of your wonder [=your chariot], let your ruddy birds, carry you at the critical moment.
6. You raised up Vandana through your wondrous powers; o wondrous bulls, (you raised) up Rebha by your powers.
   You rescue the son of Tugra from the ocean, and you made Cyavāna youthful again.
7. You granted nourishment and relief to Atri, who was led down into the scorching (earth cleft).
   Having found pleasure in his good praise, in return you granted sight to Kaṇva, whose eyes were pasted shut.
8. You swelled the cow (with milk) for Śayu of long ago, who needed help, o Aśvins.
   You released the quail-hen from tight straits, and you inserted a shank for Viśpalā.
9. You gave to Pedu the serpent-smashing white horse, sped by Indra, o Aśvins—
   the overwhelming, powerful (horse), repeatedly called upon by the stranger, the strong-limbed bull that wins a thousand (cattle).
10. Needing help ourselves, o men, we call on you, who are nobly born, for aid, o Aśvins.
    Finding pleasure in our songs, journey here to us by your chariot bearing goods for our safe passage.
11. Of one accord, Nāsatyas, journey here to us with the fresh speed of a falcon,
    for, as one who has given an oblation, I call upon you, Aśvins, at the break of the newest dawn of all.

I.119 Aśvins

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
10 verses: jagatī

The hymn begins along expected lines with a summons to the Aśvins to come to the sacrifice (vs. 1). However, the offering mentioned is not soma, but rather the hot milk (*gharmá*) of the Pravargya rite (vs. 2cd). In 2cd and probably verse 3 Kakṣīvant describes the arrival of the Aśvins, who bring Sūryā, the Daughter of the Sun, to her wedding. The bridegroom of Sūryā is Soma in the late R̥gveda (X.85), but in

5cd she chooses the Aśvins themselves as her husbands. Pirart (1995: 252) suggests that *yuvā́m pátī* is a corruption for *yuvā́m pátim** and therefore the line means that Sūryā chose "the young (Soma) as her husband." But if the *gharmá* in this hymn in some sense displaces the soma, perhaps the poet has replaced the god Soma by the deities of the Pravargya rite, the Aśvins. For further on the self-choice marriage of Sūryā and Kakṣīvant's treatments of it, see Jamison (2001). In this connection verse 3 contains one of Kakṣīvant's characteristic verbal tricks: the phrase *sūrím ā́ váram*, which literally means "the patron according to his will," is a scrambling of **sūriyā́m váram*, with a reference to Sūryā (whose name is normally read trisyllabically as Sūr(i)yā) and her svayaṃ-*vara* (self-choice) marriage. This scrambled phrase is "repaired" in verse 5 with the straightforward declaration of her choice. See Jamison (2006).

1. I summon your chariot with its many wiles, swift as thought, with speeding horses, and worthy of the sacrifice, in order for us to live—
   the winning (chariot) of a thousand banners, bringing hundreds of good things, obedient to command, and creating wide space—toward (our offered) enjoyment.
2. At its journey our lofty insight has been aimed at your praise. (Our praises, going) in (all) directions, converge (upon you).
   I sweeten the hot milk; your help comes in return. Ūrjānī [=Sūryā] has mounted your chariot, Aśvins.
3. When, contending with each another, they have clashed with one another for beauty—(those) innumerable combatants, victorious in battle—
   then your chariot appears ever brighter in its steep descent, when you convey the patron according to his will, Aśvins.
4. You came to Bhujyu, tossing (in the sea), with your self-harnessed birds, conveying him back from his ancestors [=from the dead].
   You traveled your most noble track, o bulls, and your great help became manifest to Divodāsa.
5. For the sake of your marvel [=your chariot], Aśvins, two voices guided the chariot harnessed by you and its (cargo?) belonging to the warrior band [? =the Aśvins].
   Having come to marriage to you for a partnership with you, the noble young girl chose you two as her husbands.
6. You give Rebha space from being besieged, (and you cool) the intensely heated, hot (vessel) with snow for Atri.
   You swelled nourishment in Śayu's cow. Vandana was extended through a long lifetime.
7. You constructed Vandana, who had fallen apart because of age, like workers a chariot, o wondrous ones.

Out of the soil you give birth to the inspired poet [=Vandana?] amid acclaim. Here (too) your skill will prevail for the one honoring (you).

8. You went to the one piteously crying in the far distance [=Bhujyu], entrapped by his own father's abandonment of him.
Your enduring help that brings the sunlight, your brilliant mastery, arose at the critical moment.

9. And the little fly whispered honeyed (speech) to you, (and now) in the exhilaration of soma, (Kakṣīvant), the son of Uśij, cries out (to you):
"You two try to win the thought of Dadhyañc, and then the horse's head replies to you."

10. In friendship you offer to Pedu a white (horse), bringing many boons, overcoming contenders,
the heaven-bound (horse), hard to overcome by arrows in battles, to be celebrated, and conquering the lands, like Indra.

I.120 Aśvins

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
12 verses: gāyatrī 1, 10–12; kakubh 2, kāvirāj 3, naṣṭarūpī 4, tanuśirā 5, uṣṇih 6, viṣṭārabr̥hatī 7, kr̥ti 8, virāj 9

Even for Kakṣīvant, a master of enigmatic poetry, this is an especially puzzling hymn, and not surprisingly it has given rise to quite different interpretations. For example, in Geldner's view the hymn concludes with the poet's complaint that his patron has been ungenerous. Much of the hymn reflects that disappointment: Kakṣīvant pretends to be a simple man but creates metrically irregular, obscure verses, characterized by irony and hidden malice. While there is much to recommend in Geldner's approach to the hymn, we have taken a different tack.

The most notable feature of this hymn is its strange metrical pattern. The hymn begins in gāyatrī (vs. 1), a simple and common meter, but then sinks gradually into metrical chaos and finally emerges gradually into gāyatrī once again (vss. 10–12). The metrical transitions are marked by verse 2 in kakubh and verse 9 in virāj. Both are rarer Vedic meters, but they are meters found elsewhere. However, the middle section (vss. 3–8) changes meter in every verse and with one exception (vs. 6 in uṣṇih), the meters are jagged and very unusual. The impression they make is one of dislocation and even poetic incompetence, although it is obviously an artful and deliberate incompetence.

This metrical structure underscores the theme of the hymn. The poet begins, in gāyatrī, with a question about who will earn the support of the Aśvins. The first two pādas are typical and formulaic. Indeed, they reflect a very old, traditional formula,

since the phrasing of ab resembles lines from the Gāthās of Zarathustra: Yasna 33.2 *tōi vārāi rādəntī, ahurahyā zaošē mazdā* "These will bring success to his desire and will be to the liking of the Wise Lord." If this formulaic identification is correct, then pāda c may stand in intentionally shocking contrast: it is a question not about a successful worshiper but about an incompetent one, and immediately after this question the poet's meter begins to disintegrate. The poet does not have the knowledge he needs (2) and fears that he might become someone *acetás* "without insight," a word that recalls *ápracetas* "inattentive" in 1c and the anxiety that propels the hymn. The Aśvins know a certain entranceway, "doors," that the poet does not. Pirart (1995: 263) suggests that these doors are the "doors of riches," after I.68.10, 72.8, and similarly IX.45.3 = 64.3, and Geldner, the "doors of awareness" after IX.10.6 and similarly VII.95.6. It would be fully in accord with Kakṣīvant's enigmatic style to mean either and both, especially since the poet's knowledge and his prosperity are bound together.

Because of his anxiety, the poet calls on the Aśvins to help him (3–4). Verses 5 and 6 are particularly problematic, but they appear to describe the poet's shortcomings. His speech is not grand like that recited before the Bhr̥gavāna fire, the fire originally lit by Bhr̥gu that symbolizes the unity of all the clans, and it is not beautiful (5). His voice is rough, but he asks the Aśvins to hear his song as if it were the song that Takavāna sings (6). Takavāna appears only here, but judging from the context he is someone whose beautiful voice the poet hopes the Aśvins will hear instead of his own raspy one. The poet thus asks the Aśvins to overlook his faults, and not to consign him and his people to the evildoings of their enemies (7–8). In the last verses the crisis seems to have passed. The poet's verse stabilizes (into virāj), and the poet can hope that his measured pādas will win him measures of goods (9). At the beginning of this verse he also demonstrates his ability to puzzle. The subject is a cow, suggested by the previous verse, but what does the cow represent? Although it looks back several verses, one possibility is his Speech (vs. 5). Before he couldn't speak the way he wished, but now he hopes that his Speech will yield the milk that will bind the Aśvins to him.

In verse 10 the "horseless chariot" of the Aśvins is the hymn, which, safely back in gāyatrī, is now running smoothly. It will carry the poet to successful sacrifices (11). This then leaves a problem in interpreting the last verse. Perhaps the anxiety he expressed in the middle of the hymn was not real but imagined, a kind of a dream. This last verse then might be the dismissal of that anxiety and of the concern that he will not receive the patronage he deserves.

1. What oblation to you will bring success, Aśvins? Who will be to the
   liking of you both?
   How will he make offering?—he, an inattentive man!
2. He should ask just the two [=the Aśvins] who know about the doors—he,
   the man who does not know properly, who later (would be) without
   insight.
   Never are the two inactive around the mortal.

3. We call upon you two knowing ones. Knowing, you should speak to us a (poetic) thought today.
   Distributing portions, the one seeking you chants forth.
4. In my naïveté I ask (you), not (other) gods, about the unerring (soma), created with the *vaṣaṭ*-call, o wondrous ones.
   Protect us from the more powerful and the more violent one!
5. (The Speech that says,) "I who cry forth as if at the Bhr̥gavāna (fire), who am beautiful, I the Speech by which Pajriya [=Kakṣīvant] sacrifices to you"—
   seeking refreshment, (I do) not (cry) forth (such Speech) as one who knows.
6. Hear the song of Takavāna, even though I have rasped it out to you, Aśvins.
   (Set) your eyes here, lords of beauty, upon our home.
7. Because you two were in great joy surely (then) when you had jerked it away—
   o good ones, you should be fine herdsmen for us!—protect us from the ill-wishing wolf.
8. Do not betray us to a nobody (who is) our enemy. Do not let our cows go from our house to a nowhere place,
   giving sustenance from their udders, though without young.
9. She should give milk in order to establish an alliance with you two. Measure us for wealth accompanied by prizes of victory,
   and measure us for nourishment accompanied by cattle.
10. I have won the horseless chariot of the Aśvins with their prizewinning mares.
    By it I enjoy abundant delight.
11. In every way this easy-moving chariot will carry me again and again among the peoples, o body (of mine),
    to the soma-drinking.
12. So then, I take no account of a dream nor of a rich man who gives no sustenance.
    Both these vanish in the morning.

I.121 Indra or the All Gods

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
15 verses: triṣṭubh

Of all the challenging and maddening hymns in Kakṣīvant's small but memorable oeuvre, this hymn may present the biggest challenges and the most maddening set of puzzles—though the immediately preceding one is at least in competition. It

seems that antiquity had a similar reaction, as the Anukramaṇī is not even sure whether the hymn is dedicated to Indra or to the All Gods. We will here sketch a structure and suggest some themes, but we make no claims for the correctness of all the choices made in our translation or commentary.

The predominant deity of the hymn must be Indra, though his name does not appear until verse 11, and the governing myth of the hymn is that of the opening of the Vala cave. But other mythic material is interspersed through the hymn, and the present-day sacrificial situation is also treated—while, conversely, the Vala myth is sometimes presented as if it were happening at this moment. In fact, the first verse sets up this scenario, with questions about Indra's attendance at a sacrifice where the Aṅgirases, his helpers in the Vala myth, are performing their hymns. The same prospective appearance of Indra among the Aṅgirases is also described in verse 3, with the recital of the Vala myth continued, in the past, in verse 4. The intervening verse (2) is also couched in the mythic past and begins (2ab) with Indra's primal cosmogonic deed, the separation of heaven and earth. The second half of verse 2 contains one of the most discussed portions of the hymn, a set of three memorably described female figures whose relationships to each other and to the "buffalo" who is gazing upon at least one of them are unclear. In our view, all three figures are different forms of Dawn, the subject of two of Kakṣīvant's other hymns (I.123–124), as she transforms herself from a young girl choosing her husband (the Sun) to a wife (of the Sun in the form of a horse) to a mother (of a cow: the light of Dawn is frequently compared to cows). The buffalo is probably Indra, and the focus on Dawn is appropriate to a hymn celebrating the opening of the Vala cave and the release of the dawn-cows.

Verse 4 alluded to the impetus that drinking soma gave to Indra at the opening of the Vala cave, and the following two verses (5–6) sketch the history of Indra's possession of soma and then turn to the soma currently being produced at today's dawn sacrifice. The following, quite puzzling verse (7) seems to identify Indra with the sun and, by implication, with the shining soma of the previous verse, also compared to the sun. The poet seems further to suggest that, even in the absence of all the sacrificial necessities, the presence of radiant Indra is tantamount to a properly performed sacrifice, for the benefit of the poet and his family. (We suggest that Kakṣīvant is alluding to himself here, on the basis of similar vocabulary used in I.126.5.)

Verse 8 begins a series of mythological verses, with an intertwining of the Vala myth (9ab, 10ab) and that of Indra's slaying of Śuṣṇa with the aid of Uśanā Kāvya (9cd, 10cd, 11d, 12) and the related myth of the halting of the Sun's horses and chariot (13), with incidental mentions of other deeds of Indra (the Vr̥tra battle, 11c) thrown in. The interpenetration of these mythic allusions keeps the audience off balance, a queasy feeling much increased by the disjunctive and elliptical syntax.

The final two verses (14–15), asking for protection and valuables, are by contrast quite straightforward. Presumably on this subject Kakṣīvant did not want the god to misunderstand.

1. Will he, hastening to the cup of the men seeking the gods, listen properly to the hymns of the Aṅgirases?
   When he has reached the clans of the secure habitation, will the one worthy of the sacrifice stride widely at their ceremony?
2. He propped up heaven, and he sprinkled its foundation [=earth]. The ingenious one (provided) movable wealth of man and cow for the prize.
   The buffalo gazed after (Dawn,) the self-created maiden making her choice (of husband), (who turned into) the consort of the horse [=Sun], (then into) the mother of the cow.
3. The surpassing king will come through the days to the age-old call of the clans of the Aṅgirases for the ruddy (cows).
   He will fashion the mace, his team-mate; he will prop up heaven for the sake of the two-footed and four-footed belonging to men.
4. In the exhilaration of this (soma) you gave the noisy vanguard of the ruddy (cows), (previously) covered over, to truth,
   when the three-humped (herd) was (momentarily) turned back in its forward surge. You uncovered the deceits and unclosed the doors for the (people) descended from Manu.
5. For you is this milk, consisting of good semen, which your two bustling parents brought as a bounty, (for you) to become surpassing—
   your blazing legacy, which they gained through sacrifice, the milk of the ruddy one who gives sap as milk.
6. And now he [=Soma] has been produced—let him give exhilaration as he advances; he has shone forth like the sun from this dawn,
   when the drop, (being impelled) by (priests) having sweat as their oblation, (itself) pouring with the offering spoon, has reached its old (ritual) domains.
7. (Even) when a woodpile provided with good kindling should be far away, the sun (still goes) around the cowpens at the ceremony,
   when you [=Indra] shine forth, through the days that bring results, for the surpassing one [=Kakṣīvant?] whose clan is on the (wedding?) carts, seeking livestock.
8. You brought here the two tawny (horses) attained from great heaven, as you were battling for the wellspring (of soma), which was overwhelming in heavenly brilliance,
   when for you to grow strong they milked with stones the exhilarating tawny (soma), that was frenzied for cows [=milk], befriended by the wind.

9. Ingenious, you rolled back from the cow the metallic stone of heaven, which had been brought nearby,
   when, o much-invoked one, vanquishing Śuṣṇa, you kept encircling him with endless deadly weapons.
10. When it is just before the sun enters into (the fold) of darkness, then cast the missile against the bolt, o possessor of the stones.
   Even the power of Śuṣṇa that surrounded him—that you tore away from heaven, even though it was well-knotted.
11. The two great surfaces that have no wheels, Heaven and Earth, cheered you on at this deed, o Indra:
   You put Vr̥tra to sleep powerfully with your mace, as he was lying upon the streams, (and you put to sleep) the boar [=Śuṣṇa?].
12. You, o Indra, the manly one driving to the men for help—mount the (horses) of the Wind, the best conveyors, easy to yoke.
   What Uśanā Kāvya gave to you to provide exhilaration, that decisive, Vr̥tra-smiting mace had he fashioned.
13. You brought to a halt the tawny mares of the Sun for men. Etaśa bore the wheel; (you were) on your own, Indra.
   Having cast (it) forth to the far shore of the ninety and nine (rivers), you rolled the non-sacrificers over into the pit.
14. Protect us from this evil rage and from difficulty in a close encounter, o Indra, mace-bearer.
   Hold out toward us prizes by the cartload, with horses as their foundation—for refreshment, for fame, and for liberality.
15. Let not your favor wither away from us, o you great in prizes: refreshments will completely cover (us).
   Give us a share in the cows of the stranger, o bounteous one. Might we be your most bounteous feasting companions.

I.122 All Gods

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except virāḍrūpā 5–6

This hymn is divided almost equally between praise and invocation to a variety of gods (vss. 1–6) and a complex dānastuti (vss. 7–15). As is true of all of Kakṣīvant's oeuvre there are many twists and turns along the way. The part devoted to the gods seems to define an early-morning sacrifice in its first verses, especially those calling on Dawn and Night (vs. 2), the Wind as well as Indra (vs. 3), and the Aśvins and Agni (vs. 4), though Rudra and the Maruts (vs. 1), Pūṣan (vs. 5), and, especially, Mitra and Varuṇa (vss. 6–7, 9) also appear. An early-morning ritual

is appropriate for the following dānastuti, since the priestly gifts (dakṣiṇās) are distributed then.

The dānastuti is filled with personal names, and, as often, it is difficult to disentangle the relationships among them. In fact it appears that we may be dealing with competing potential patrons, each praised for a fleeting moment for his generosity until a larger prize from a different patron is in the offing. In verse 12 the poet seems to be inviting this competition, promising to act as a kind of kingmaker for whomever he gets as patron, and in the difficult verse 13 the poet may be suggesting that patrons with goods to offer are attempting to surpass competing patrons with their largesse. This interpretation remains uncertain, however.

1. O you of quick fervor [=priests], bring forward your drink, your stalk,
   your sacrifice for Rudra who grants rewards.
   I have praised (him) along with the heroes of the lord of heaven; (I have
   praised) the Maruts as if aiming at the two world-halves.
2. It is for Dawn and Night, like two wives, to strengthen the Early
   Invocation—the two that are known in many ways:
   (the one) like a barren woman wearing a castoff cloak, (the other) with
   the glory of the sun, lovely to see with her golden (ornaments).
3. Let the earth-circling one [=Wind], rising at early morning, invigorate us.
   Let the Wind, (child?) of the waters, accompanied by bulls, invigorate us.
   Sharpen us, o Indra and "Mountain" [=Indra's mace]. Let all the gods
   then create wide space for us.
4. And it is for (Kakṣīvant), son of Uśij [/the fire-priest], to call for me this
   glorious pair [=Aśvins], the pursuers (of the oblation), the drinkers,
   for the whitening (of dawn).
   Put forward for yourselves the Child of the Waters [=Agni], forward the
   two mothers [=kindling sticks] of abundant [?] Āyu.
5. It is for (Kakṣīvant), son of Uśij [/the fire-priest], to call the "screecher,"
   the laud, for you as if with a shout, at the attainment of the silvery
   one [=soma?].
   (Put him [=Pūṣan]?) forward for yourselves, for Pūṣan to give. I would
   call here Agni's assemblage of good ones [=gods].
6. Hear these calls of mine, Mitra and Varuṇa, and hear them in your seat
   on all sides.
   Let the one who grants the gift of hearing, who hears well, hear us—the
   Sindhu River with her waters who provides good lands.

7. This gift of yours is to be praised, Mitra and Varuṇa. Having received
   hundreds of cows among the Pr̥kṣayāmas: Pajra,
   Śrutaratha, Priyaratha, they [=priests and poets] immediately came to
   prosperity, upon penning them in.
8. The largesse of him who offers great bounty is to be praised. Together
   might we, having good heroes, win (that) of Nahus,

who for the Pajras is the man providing prizewinning mares and for me
is the patron (of largesse) consisting of horses and chariots.

9. A man who's a liar, a crooked liar who presses (soma that's) like water
for you two, o Mitra and Varuṇa,
he himself installs a wasting disease in his own heart, while the truthful
man gains his object through his oblations.
10. He, spurred by wondrous power, is more forceful than proud Nahus,
and his fame is sung by men.
He whose gifts have been set loose drives as a pumped-up runner,
always the champion in all battles.
11. Now then, as you go to the call of Nahus the patron, o gladdening
kings of immortality, hear
what largesse of Nabhojū and of Nirava there is for the possessor of
the chariot to proclaim in its greatness.
12. "Whichever patron (we belong to), we shall establish him as a force," so
did they say on the attainment of ten-part (gushing [=soma?]).
The brilliant things in which the assemblage of good ones [=gods] finds
enjoyment—let them all [=gods] gain (them) as their victory prize.
13. Let us find elation in the ten-part gush (of soma?), when the twice five
[=fingers?] come, bringing foods.
The one providing desirable horses, the one providing desirable reins,
and these masters (of goods)—are they heading straight toward the
men to surpass (them)?
14. The "flood" with golden ears and bejeweled necks—let all the gods
make it wide for us.
Let the ruddy ones [=Dawns?], coming here in an instant to the songs
of the stranger, find pleasure in both of us [=singers and patrons].
15. The four young'uns [=foals?] of Maśarśāra and the three of King
Āyavasa, the victorious (come) to me.
Your chariot, o Mitra and Varuṇa, with its long front, with hands as its
guiding rope, has shone like the sun.

I.123 Dawn

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
13 verses: triṣṭubh

One of the loveliest of the R̥gvedic Dawn hymns. It begins with references to the dakṣiṇā or "priestly gifts" distributed at the early-morning sacrifice (vss. 1–6), almost as if to get the business of the hymn out of the way. But even here the gifts are clearly under the control of the lovely young Dawn, whose beauties are hinted at. The next section (vss. 7–9) confronts the usual conundrums and paradoxes

about Dawn (see also I.113 above)—both her twinned opposite number, Night (vs. 7), and the identity and diversity of the dawns of each individual day (vss. 8–9), each one dutifully conforming to the rules that order the cosmos by performing her appointed rounds. In the last of these verses (9), Dawn's daily journey is likened to a girl's going to a lovers' tryst, and this simile provides the transition to the next two verses (10–11), where she is compared to a beautiful young woman showing herself off. The final two verses (12–13) combine the gift theme of the beginning of the hymn with the periodicity of the dawns treated in the middle section.

1. A broad chariot has been yoked for the priestly gift. The gods, the immortals have mounted it.
   Up from the dark has arisen the lady of extensive power, being attentive to the human dwelling place.
2. Earlier than all creation she has awoken, the lofty one, conquering, winning the prize.
   On high she has gazed forth—the young woman come into being again. Dawn has come here, the first one at the Early Invocation.
3. When today you will share out a share to the superior men among mortals, o nobly born goddess Dawn,
   god Savitar, master of the house, will here declare to the Sun that we are without offense.
4. To house after house she drives *in her greatness, day after day assuming (new) names.
   Seeking to win, flashing, over and over she has come hither. She has her share of the very tip-top of goods.
5. Sister of Bhaga, kin to Varuṇa, o liberal Dawn, be first awake.
   The institutor of evil should lag behind. Might we conquer him with a priestly gift as our chariot.
6. Let liberalities rise up, up plentiful gifts; up have the blazing fires stood.
   The eagerly sought goods hidden by darkness do the radiant dawns reveal.
7. The one goes away; the other approaches: having distinct forms, the two day-halves proceed in tandem.
   Of the two that circle around, the one has hidden the darkness: Dawn has flashed with her ever-blazing chariot.
8. Of the same appearance today, just the same appearance also tomorrow, they follow the long(-standing) ordinance of Varuṇa.
   The faultless ones make a circuit through thirty "wagon-treks" [=days of the month], each one encompassing her purpose in a single day.
9. Knowing the name of the first day, gleaming, bright-faced, she has been born from the dark.
   She does not violate the ordinance of truth, every day going to the appointed place like a maiden to a rendezvous.

10. Like a girl exulting in her body, you go, o goddess, to the god who seeks to attain you [=Sun].
    Youthful, full of smiles, radiant, you reveal your breast in the east [/before (him)].
11. Of lovely appearance like a maiden groomed by her mother, you reveal your body to be seen.
    Dawn forth widely, o Dawn, auspicious one. The other dawns will not achieve this of yours.
12. Possessing horses, cows, and all desirable things, aligning themselves with the rays of the sun,
    they go away and they come here again, bearing auspicious names—the dawns.
13. Guiding yourself following the rein of truth, place ever more auspicious resolve in us.
    O Dawn, easy to invoke, dawn forth to us today. Let there be riches among us and among our bounteous (patrons).

I.124 Dawn

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
13 verses: triṣṭubh

Another virtuosic Dawn hymn. Here the poet takes the usual generic themes, especially Dawn as a beautiful woman, and creates highly specific images, especially in verses 7–8, which provide a series of almost sociological portraits of ancient Indian female figures. In verse 7 we first (pāda a) meet a brotherless girl boldly approaching men; since the brother was important in finding and arranging suitable matches, a brotherless girl was at a disadvantage in the marriage market and needed to take initiative on her own. (See Schmidt 1987: 30–75.) The next image is a pun (pāda b), with one harmless generic image and one shockingly specific one. In the harmless reading a figure, presumably male, mounts a chariot to seek prizes; in the other a woman, presumably a prostitute, shows herself off on a platform for money. The third image (pādas cd) is of the legitimate wife adorned for her husband, but even there the image shades into that of a loose woman showing her breast. The next verse (8) treats the common theme of the sisters Dawn and Night, but again Dawn is presented in a particular female role. In the second pāda, the "girl to be gazed upon" may well refer to the display motif of the ancient Indian self-choice marriage (Svayaṃvara; see Jamison 2001), while the "maidens with a choice" may refer to the same phenomena, girls making their choice of bridegroom at a specially called assembly (see Jamison 2003).

Even more striking perhaps is verse 4, where Dawn is compared to three different animals or their parts: she is glossy like the breast of a waterbird who preens it;

she reveals herself like an elephant kneeling to drink; and she wakens the sleeping like a fly, buzzing around again and again. (We owe these interpretations to Thieme 1965 [=1971: 214–27].)

Nothing in the rest of the hymn is quite so quirky, but the standard tropes are well handled. The common counterpoint between individual Dawn and the multitude of identical dawns that have preceded and will follow today's dawn is found in verses 2–3, 6, and 9. Another common theme, the diversity of beings that Dawn awakens, appears in verses 1, 6, and 12. The final verses of the hymn raise the hope of gifts and rewards that will come with the dawn.

1. Dawn as she dawns when the fire is being kindled; the sun as it rises—
   each has propped up its own light widely.
   God Savitar here and now has impelled forth our two-footed, forth our
   four-footed, each to go to its task.
2. Not belittling the divine commandments, but diminishing human (life-)
   spans,
   the last of those who, one by one, have gone, the first of those who come
   hither—Dawn has flashed forth.
3. This Daughter of Heaven has appeared opposite, dressed in light, in the
   same way (as the others), from the east.
   She follows along the path of truth, straight to the goal. Like one who
   knows the way, she does not confound the directions.
4. She has appeared like the breast of a preening waterbird. Like a female
   elephant she has revealed her intimate parts.
   Wakening the sleeping like a fly, she has come as the latest of those who,
   one by one, have come here again (and again).
5. In the eastern half of the dusky realm that cannot be flown to, the
   begetter of cows has put forth her beacon.
   She spreads out further, more widely, filling both laps of her two parents
   [=Heaven and Earth].
6. Just thus is she, the latest of many, to be seen. Neither the non-kin does
   she avoid, nor the kin.
   Exulting in her spotless body, neither from the small does she retreat, nor
   from the great, as she shines forth.
7. Like a brotherless (girl) she goes right up to men—like one mounting a
   chariot seat to win prizes [/(display-)platform to gain property].
   Like an eager wife, richly dressed, for her husband, Dawn, like a wanton,
   lets her breast spill over.
8. The (one) sister has left the natal place to her older sister. She goes away
   from her, like (a girl) to be gazed upon.
   Dawning forth with the rays of the sun, she smears unguent on herself,
   like (maidens) with a choice going to assemblies.

9. Day after day the latest of those earlier sisters advances from behind toward the earlier one.
   Let the newer ones now dawn richly for us as of old—the day-bright dawns.
10. Awaken those who grant, bounteous Dawn; unawakening let the niggards sleep.
    Richly dawn for the bounteous ones, o bounteous one, richly for the praiser, o liberal-spirited one, as you rouse them.
11. This young woman has whitened down from the east. She yokes the forefront of the ruddy cows.
    She will dawn forth now; her beacon will stand out. Agni will reverently come to house after house.
12. The birds have also flown up from their dwelling and the men who partake of food, at your first flush.
    To the one who is at home you convey much of value, goddess Dawn, and to the pious mortal.
13. You have been praised, praiseworthy ones, by my sacred formulation. You, eager (for it), have been strengthened, o Dawns.
    Goddesses, with your help may we win spoils in hundreds and thousands.

I.125 Svanaya's Dānastuti

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 4–5

This hymn falls into two distinct but thematically connected parts. The second part (vss. 4–7) develops an extravagant picture of the rewards that accrue to the generous giver and sacrificer. The whole cosmos seems to exist only to gratify him, and a place among the gods as an immortal awaits him. The syntax and sentiments are straightforward and indeed somewhat simplistic.

The other section (vss. 1–3) is quite different. It consists of an apparent dialogue between an "early-coming" figure (vs. 3) and, probably, a householder or host (vs. 2), with a scene-setting introduction (vs. 1). The word "early-coming" (*prātarítvan*) is found only in this hymn and in a narrative in the Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā (besides the later etymological work, the Nirukta), where the same dialogic relationship between the Prātaritvan and a householder, in that case Manu, obtains. In both passages the Prātaritvan seems to be an itinerant priest or poet, offering his ritual services to a sacrificer, his potential host. But he also stands in for or represents a god who is coming to attend the early-morning ritual. (Compare the compound of similar form and similar meaning *prātaryā́van* "early-driving, early-traveling," used especially of the Aśvins and their chariot.) Thus, the host is

more inclined to receive the itinerant Prātaritvan because he may be entertaining a god in disguise, and the Prātaritvan is not only seeking payment for his ritual work, the dakṣiṇā whose giver is lyrically celebrated in verses 4–7, but also himself brings (or claims to bring) goods and good fortune for his host, as is emphasized in all three verses of this portion of the hymn. The relationship between them is also presented as somewhat coercive or threatening in the second half of verse 2 (which unfortunately contains several hapaxes and is therefore not very clear). The Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā narrative, a version of "Manu's Cups," depicts that threat much more strongly, as an aspect of the "anxieties of hospitality." For further discussion see Jamison (1996a: 184–89).

1. In the early morning, the early-coming (priest/god) establishes a treasure.
   An observant man, receiving him (as guest), lays it in himself.
   Increasing his own progeny and lifetime with it, possessing good heroes,
   he is accompanied by thriving of wealth.
2. [The host:] "He will have good cows, good gold, good horses—for him
   Indra establishes lofty vigor—
   he who, o early-comer, binds you up like a pard [?] with a thong [?], when
   you come hither with goods."
3. [The early-comer:] "I have come here today early in the morning with a
   goods-filled chariot, seeking one who performs (sacrifice) well, the son
   of my seeking.
   Make (Indra?) drink the pressed (soma) of the exhilarating plant;
   strengthen the hero-ruling (Indra?) with liberal gifts."
4. The rivers, embodiments of joy, milk-cows, flow near to the one who has
   sacrificed and the one who will sacrifice;
   seeking fame, the streams of ghee on every side go near to him who
   grants and has granted.
5. On the back of the firmament he stands firmly fixed. Whoever grants, he
   goes among the gods;
   to him the waters, the rivers stream ghee; for him this gift-cow (dakṣiṇā)
   swells always.
6. For the givers of dakṣiṇās only there are these brilliant (bounties) here;
   for the givers of dakṣiṇās there are suns in heaven.
   Givers of dakṣiṇās have a share in immortality; givers of dakṣiṇās
   lengthen their own lifetime.
7. Let those who grant not encounter difficulty or outrage; let the patrons,
   of good commandment, not grow old;
   let there be some other enclosure for them, but to the non-granting one
   let there come the flames of pain.

I.126 Kakṣīvant's Dānastuti

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 6–7

Kakṣīvant's last hymn is, to be idiomatic, a humdinger. It details in extravagant terms the gifts that King Svanaya Bhāvya presented to him, in return for the fame the poet could bestow on him (see esp. vss. 1d and 2d). The first five verses list the gifts, especially the (not quite believable) numbers of livestock, given to Kakṣīvant and his family, the Pajras. The last of these verses (5) ends with an elaborate simile, not all the details of which are clear, comparing the Pajras seeking fame with noblemen seeking brides by attending maidens' Svayaṃvaras (bridal self-choice ceremonies) with their carts. (The word "cart" [*ánas*] is specialized in the R̥gveda for the vehicle that conveys the bride home.) The phrase "(the Pajras) sought fame" (5d) provides a ring with the first verse (1d), where the king, Kakṣīvant's patron, is "seeking fame," and brings the dānastuti proper to a close.

The final two verses (6–7) provide an erotic, indeed rather obscene, appendix, with a vignette of the poet and one of the girls he received as part of his gift. Already in verse 3 "ten chariots carrying brides" were mentioned as part of his loot, and the simile about Svayaṃvaras in verse 5 also helps set up the erotic atmosphere. Besides the striking simile of a mongoose (*kaśīkā*, a playful variant of the poet's name Kakṣīvant) as sexual partner, verse 6 contains a number of hapaxes and entirely unclear lexical items, which may well involve phonological deformation to play on taboo words. (The second half of the verse appears to allow the word *yabh* "fuck" to be assembled from parts of several words.) It is a pity that we understand it as little as we do. The last verse (7) contains the ostensible and crudely seductive speech of the woman herself. Kakṣīvant has indeed gone out with a bang.

1. Not feeble are the praises I present through my inspiration to Bhāvya
   who lives on the Sindhu,
   who meted out to me a thousand (soma-)pressings, the invincible king
   seeking fame.
2. A hundred neck-ornaments of the king in want (of fame), a hundred
   horses I took as soon as they were offered;
   a hundred cows of the lord (I), Kakṣīvant, (have taken). (Now) his
   unaging fame stretches to heaven.
3. The dusky (horses) given by Svanaya have come to me, and ten chariots
   carrying brides.
   A thousand and sixty cattle have followed. Kakṣīvant gained them at the
   suppertime [=evening] of the days.

4. Forty sorrel (horses) of the ten-wagon train lead at the front a rank of a thousand (cows).
   Steeds arousing delight, covered with pearls, have the Kakṣīvants, the Pajras swept up.
5. Following the previous presentation, I got for you three yoked (horses?) and eight cows that suckle the stranger—
   (for you,) the Pajras, who sought fame—as those of good lineage provided with (wedding-)carts seek maidens with a choice, appropriate to their clan.
6. She who, when squeezed and squished, keeps stinking like a mongoose—
   fusing (with me), the woman to be enjoyed [/coiled around] gives me hundreds of "spurts"—
7. (Saying,) "Feel me up—keep going further. Don't belittle my "little things [=private parts].
   I am entirely hairy, like a little ewe of the Gandhāris."

Hymns I.127–139 are attributed to Paruchepa Daivodāsi. This poet is especially fond of the long and elaborate atyaṣṭi meter, consisting of seven pādas, generally arranged in three groups: 12 12 8 / 8 8 / 12 8. The eight-syllable pādas that end the first and third "lines" (that is, pādas c and g) generally ring changes on the pāda that precedes, by repetition of the last word(s), by lexical substitution of synonyms, or by syntactic complementarity. A simple example of the first is I.127.1c, which repeats the epithet *jātávedasam*, which also ended 1b. Lexical substitution is found in 1g, where *sarpíṣaḥ* "of the melted butter" replaces *ghr̥tásya* "of the ghee" in 1f. Sometimes the "rhyme" pāda contributes material necessary to complete the syntax established in the preceding pāda. See I.127.2fg, where the rhyme pāda g provides the verb that must be supplied in the relative clause in pāda f. There are more complex relationships as well, including what will later be called *śleṣa*s, with a word or construction having two possible and incompatible readings. A nice example is I.127.3bc, where the form *druhaṃtaráḥ* can be analyzed either as *druhaṃ-tará* "overcoming deceit" or *dru-hantara* "better at striking wood," the former prevailing in pāda b and the latter, because of the simile "like an axe," in pāda c. This patterned variation creates a pleasing effect. (In our translation the three groups of pādas are separated into three lines, and the rhyme pādas c and g are set off by dashes.)

Paruchepa is also fond of rare words, sometimes phonetic deformations of parallel words in the same verse, puns, and contorted syntactic constructions, and many of the puzzles in his hymns have not been completely solved. But Geldner's judgment of his poetry—"wortreich, aber gedankenarm" (rich in words, but poor in thoughts)—seems harsh and unjustified. These poems are difficult to work through, but their verbal artistry and intricacy seem to us to provide a more than sufficient reward.

I.127 Agni

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
11 verses: atyaṣṭi, except atidhṛti 6

Full of puns, phonological tricks, and syntactic give-and-take, this hymn celebrates Agni in both his ritual role (e.g., vss. 1–2, 8, 10) and in his physical power (e.g., vss. 3–4, 6). The pleasures of the hymn come more from the interplay of the verbal elements than from any sustained thematic development, and in that sense Geldner's "gedankenarm" (quoted above) may be accurate, but who needs thoughts when we have such words?

1. Agni I consider as the Hotar, rich in gifts, the good one, son of strength,
 Jātavedas—like a poet, Jātavedas—
 who is the god of good ceremony, with his body erect and pointed
 toward the gods.
 With his flame he yearns after the blazing forth of the ghee—of the
 melted butter being poured.
2. We sacrificers would invoke you as best sacrificer, the oldest of the
 Aṅgirases, o poet, with our thoughts—(invoke you) through our poets,
 o glowing one, with our thoughts—
 (you) like earth-encircling heaven, the Hotar of the settled domains,
 the flame-haired bull whom these clans (help)—let the clans help (him)
 to speed.
3. Because he, shining upon the many with his radiant might, becomes
 the overcomer of deceit—the overcomer of deceit, as an axe is an
 excellent striker of wood—
 at whose attack even the staunch aborts and whatever is solid, like
 the trees,
 going forth to conquer, he will hold his place, he will not be moved—
 with his conquering of the wastelands, he will not be moved.
4. Even the firm things give way to him, as is known. (The pious one) does
 service with the piercingly hot kindling sticks, for help—he does
 service to Agni for help.
 He who plunges toward the many, he carves them with his flame
 like trees.
 Even solid foods he liquefies with his strength—even the solid with his
 strength.
5. This fortifying power of his might we acquire in future (days), of him
 who by night is more beautiful to see than by day—(more beautiful
 to see) than the one who traverses by day [=sun], for (the man) whose
 lifespan is not (yet) extended,

because his [=Agni's] lifespan provides a handhold, staunch like shelter for a son.
His help, apportioned (to us?) or not, the unaging ones are pursuing—the unaging fires are pursuing.

6. For he is very noisy like the Marut troop, thundering widely in the productive meadows—thundering widely in the disorderly meadows.
The taker has taken, has eaten the oblations, as is his due, he the beacon of the sacrifice.
And then when he is excited, bristling with excitement, all take pleasure in his path—as the superior men [=Maruts] (take pleasure) in the path to beauty.
7. When, yet again, the heaven-bound praisers, the Bhr̥gus, tendering homage, invoke him—the Bhr̥gus, plundering (the fire from heaven), churning it with piety—
Agni is lord of goods, the blazing one who is their holder—
then his dear coverings the wise one should seek to win—the wise one should seek to win here.
8. We invoke you, lord of all the clans, houselord common to every one of them, for benefit—you with your trusty vehicle of songs, for benefit—
the guest of the sons of Manu, by whose mouth, as if by a father's,
(we) and all the immortals yonder (acquire) vigor—(place) the oblations and vigor among the gods.
9. You, Agni, are born as strongest by your strength, most tempestuous, for the divine conclave—like wealth for the divine conclave—
for most tempestuous is your exuberance and most brilliant your resolve—
and then they attentively surround you, o unaging one—like obedient (servants), o unaging one.
10. Let your (praise) (stand) out for the great one, who is strong by strength, wakening at dawn, for Agni, as if for a winner of cattle—let (your) praise stand (out) for Agni.
When someone with an oblation is calling on him in all the lands,
in advance of (dawn's) rays he "sings" [=crackles] like a hoarse-voiced (singer)—the glowing Hotar, (in advance of) the rays.
11. Becoming visible in the nearest nearness, bring here to us, o Agni, in concert with the gods, (riches) through your kind attention—great riches through your kind attention.
Make us regard something great, o most powerful one, for our benefit here.
Plunder, churn a great mass of good heroes for the praisers, liberal one—like a mighty (warrior) with vast power.

I.128 Agni

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
8 verses: atyaṣṭi

The sacrificial fire is the relentless focus of this hymn, and it seldom strays from the physical location of the fire on the ritual ground. Though its theme is clear and inescapable, the hymn presents us with manifold interpretive difficulties in its details, especially in the central verses 4–5, which, with their responsive fronted *krátvā* ("though his resolve," 4cd, 5a), may constitute an omphalos. There is also some sign of ring composition: the first and last (8) verses each twice refer to Agni as the Hotar, a word used nowhere else in the hymn, and the mentions of Manu in verses 1–2 are answered by two occurrences of Manu in the penultimate verse (7). In general there is much reuse of vocabulary through the hymn, and the poet plays with the words "good" and "goods" in the second part of the hymn (vss. 5–6, 8). Though the poet does not himself beg for goods, it seems clear that the desire for goods he attributes to the gods (8fg) is shared by their human counterparts.

1. This one was born here on the foundation of Manu as the best sacrificing Hotar, following the commandment of the fire-priests—Agni, following his own commandment—
   all attentive to the one who seeks a comrade, like wealth for the one who seeks fame.
   The undeceivable Hotar has sat down in the footprint of refreshment—enveloped in the footprint of refreshment.
2. The one who sends the sacrifice to its goal along the path of truth: we make him our familiar with reverence accompanied by oblations—in the conclave of gods (with reverence) accompanied by oblations.
   Because of our presentation of nourishments he does not waste away with this body,
   he whom Mātariśvan (brought) to Manu from afar—the god he brought from afar.
3. On his way he circles round the earthly (realm) in a single day, swallowing it up in an instant, the bull (depositing) his seed ever roaring—depositing his seed ever roaring—
   observing with a hundred eyes, the god victorious in the woods,
   taking his seat on the nearer ridges—Agni, on the further ridges.
4. Strongly resolved (to sacrifice), installed in front in every house, Agni is attentive to the sacrifice, to the ceremony—through his resolve he is attentive to the sacrifice.
   Through his resolve he is a ritual expert for the straight-arrow; he has watched over all beings
   from the time when as guest he was born splendid with ghee—as the conveyor (of the offering), the ritual expert, he was born.

5. When through his resolve and along with the roaring of fire, which is like the roaring of the Maruts [=thunder], the (offering-)foods are infused into his forces [=flames]—like foods for the vigorous one [=Indra?]—
because then he stimulates the giving (of good) and of goods by his might,
he will rescue us from going astray, from the crooked way—from evil utterance, from the crooked way.
6. Every (new fire), possessing extensive power, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice), the good one, takes (goods) in his right hand; advancing he does not let (them) loose—because of his longing for fame he does not let (them) loose.
For everyone who aims straight you have conveyed his oblation among the gods.
To everyone who performs well he propels his wish—Agni propels apart the two door-halves.
7. He has been established as most beneficial in the ritual enclosure belonging to Manu; Agni (has been established) like a noble clanlord at the sacrifices—a dear clanlord at the sacrifices.
He is master of the oblations of the sons of Manu, the oblations prepared with the refreshing drink.
He will rescue us from the injury of Varuṇa—from the injury of the great god.
8. Agni, the Hotar, the depository of goods do they reverently invoke; the dear, most conspicuous one they have installed as the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice)—they have installed as the conveyor of oblations—
the one who provides all lifetimes and all possessions, the Hotar deserving the sacrifice, the sage poet.
The gods, seeking goods, (have installed) the lusty one, for help—seeking goods (they have installed) the lusty one with hymns.

I.129 Indra

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
11 verses: atyaṣṭi, except atiśakvarī 8–9, aṣṭi 11

The hymn begins with familiar, and positive, themes: calls to Indra to aid our actual chariot in prize-contests and also our metaphorical chariot, the sacrifice (vss. 1–2), and these themes recur throughout the hymn. But the poet seems preoccupied with more negative topics—not only rivals and enemies in battle (vss. 3–5, 10) and demons (vss. 6, 9, 11), but also evil thoughts and words (vss. 6–8, 11). Bad Thought appears to be personified as a menacing female in verse 8, and more surprisingly Indra seems himself to have potential bad thoughts toward us, his worshipers, which we must combat by supplying him with good things to think about (vs. 7).

Given the forces thus arrayed against us, the calls for Indra's protection grow ever stronger toward the end of the hymn (vss. 9–11).

1. The chariot which you, o vigorous Indra, lead forward to gain wisdom, though it [=chariot] is far away—(which) you lead forward, faultless one—
   just in a single day you will make it to prevail as a prizewinner if you so desire.
   (Thrust forward) (this chariot) for us, the ritual adepts, you faultless thruster—like this speech for (us,) the ritual adepts.
2. Listen—you who in every battle are to be besought by men for your skill for the battle cry, Indra—by men for your skill for the charge—
   who with the champions win the sun, who with the poets overtake the prize.
   Those showing mastery set him to succeed as their prizewinner—a fortifying power like a prizewinning steed.
3. For as wondrous one you swell the bullish skin; you keep away every hostile mortal, o champion—(in that) you shun (that) mortal.
   Indra, this to you and to heaven, this to self-glorious Rudra,
   to Mitra and Varuṇa I proclaim at length—to the very merciful one at length.
4. We wish to seek Indra as a lifelong comrade for ourselves, a victorious yokemate—in the prize-contests a victorious yokemate.
   (O Indra,) help our sacred formulations to help in every battle,
   for a rival will not lay you low whom you lay low—any rival whom you lay low.
5. Bow down the arrogance of every (rival) with your help like piercingly hot kindling sticks—with powerful help, powerful one.
   Lead us as before: you are regarded as free of guilt, o champion.
   Carry away all (the goods?) from Pūru, as draft-horse—*like the draft-horse [=Agni] with his mouth, (carry them) to us.
6. I would proclaim this to the soma-drop that is to come, the refreshing (drop) that is to be poured and that, like him to be invoked [=Indra], sets my thoughts atremble—the demon-smasher that sets my thoughts atremble.
   He himself should drive insults and bad thought away from us with his murderous weapons.
   The utterer of evil should drain away lower than low [=be miscarried?]—like a little speck he should drain away.
7. Might we win with our conspicuous invocation [/oblation]; might we win wealth, o wealthy one, and an abundance of heroes—(wealth) that is delightful and an abundance of heroes.
   When he has bad thoughts (toward us) we would engorge him with (words) good to think about and with refreshment—

Indra (we would engorge) with invocations to heavenly brilliance that come true—the one worthy of the sacrifice with invocations to heavenly brilliance.

8. (Let) Indra (be) more and more preeminent among us with his self-glorious help in the shunning of bad thoughts—in the shattering of bad thoughts.
   She herself [=Bad Thought] is to be harmed who has sought us out with her devourers.
   She will be smashed, she will not wax strong—like a firebrand flung aside she will not wax strong.
9. You, Indra, with wealth in profusion for us: drive along a faultless path—drive forward along (a path) without demons.
   Accompany us in the distance; accompany us close to home.
   Protect us from a long way, from afar with your superior powers—always protect us with your superior powers.
10. You, Indra, with surpassing wealth for us: greatness will accompany you, who are so powerful, for our help—(accompany you) like an ally for great help.
    Most powerful rescuer and helper, (you help) every chariot, immortal one.
    Another one than us—any one—should you harm, o possessor of the stone—(anyone) who (himself) intends harm, o possessor of the stone.
11. Protect us, well-praised Indra, from failure, (you who are) always a requiter of bad thoughts—as a god (a requiter) of bad thoughts—
    a smasher of the evil demon, a rescuer of a poet like me.
    For the begetter has begotten you for this reason, o good one—has begotten you as smasher of demons, o good one.

I.130 Indra

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
10 verses: atyaṣṭi, except triṣṭubh 10

The first two verses of the hymn provide a conventional opening, with an invitation to Indra to journey here to drink our soma. But this journey motif gives way to a rapid sampling of Indra's great deeds: Vala (vs. 3), Vr̥tra (vss. 4–5), battles against various human and legendary enemies (vss. 7–8), ending with a truly impenetrable verse (9) about the theft of the wheel of the Sun's chariot and the involvement of Uśanā, a myth that also elsewhere evokes all the obscurantism the Vedic bard has in his control (see, e.g., V.29 and 31). The final verse of this hymn, in a different meter, sums up the poets' efforts to praise Indra.

The emphasis on mythology in this hymn contrasts sharply with the immediately preceding Indra hymn, by the same poet in the same meter, which lacks any mythological content.

1. Indra, drive here, right up to us from afar, (drive) on your own to the landing site, like a master of settlements to the rites of distributions—like a king, master of settlements, to his house.
   We invoke you, bringing you the pleasing offering when the soma is pressed.
   Like sons a father (we invoke you) for the winning of prizes—(you) most munificent, for the winning of prizes.
2. O Indra, drink the soma being pressed by the stones, poured with a bucket, like a buffalo drinking at a well-spring—like a thirsty buffalo.
   For your delightful exhilaration, for your most exceptional feeding,
   let them [=your horses] guide you here, like the golden (mares) the Sun—like the Sun through all the days.
3. He found the depository of heaven, deposited in hiding, enveloped in the stone like the embryo of a bird (in an egg)—within the boundless stone.
   The possessor of the mace, the best Aṅgiras, seeking to win (them) like a pen of cattle—
   Indra uncovered the nourishments that were enclosed—(opened) the doors to the nourishments that were enclosed.
4. Firmly holding the mace in his hands, Indra honed it sharp like a carving knife, for throwing—honed it for the smashing of the serpent.
   Enveloping yourself with strength, with vast powers, with might, o Indra,
   like a carpenter a tree from the wooden one [=forest], you cut down (the serpent)—as if with an axe you cut (him) down.
5. You, Indra, released the rivers to flow at will to the sea, like chariots—like prize-seeking chariots.
   The enduring (rivers) hitched themselves up toward the same imperishable goal,
   like milk-cows yielding all milk for Manu—yielding all milk for the people.
6. This speech have the goods-seeking Āyus fashioned for you, like a clever artisan a chariot—they have fashioned you for favor,
   adorning (you / the speech), you inspired poet, like a thoroughbred, prize-seeking horse at the contests for prizes,
   like a steed for power, for winning riches—for winning all riches.
7. You, Indra, split the ninety strongholds for Pūru, for Divodāsa the greatly pious, you prancer—with your mace (you split them) for the pious, you prancer.
   The strong one brought down Śambara from the mountain for Atithigva,
   the great one distributing riches with his strength—all riches with his strength.
8. Indra aided the Ārya sacrificer in battles, affording a hundred forms of help in all contests—in contests whose prize is the sun.

Chastising those who follow no commandment, he made the black skin [=barbarians] subject to Manu.
As a burning (fire) scorches everything dried up, he scorches the thirsty—scorches Arśaśāna down to the ground.

9. Just born, he tore off the wheel of the sun with his strength—(as?) at the ritual meal the ruddy one [=Agni?/Sun?] steals speech—showing mastery he steals it—
when you, o sage poet, had come from afar (to the house of) Uśanā for help,
passing across all appeals for favor as if with Manu—as if passing across all the days.
10. Because of our new hymns, you splitter of strongholds whose deeds are bullish, protect us along with your capable protectors.
O Indra, being praised by the Divodāsas, you should grow strong, like heaven through the days.

I.131 Indra

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
7 verses: atyaṣṭi

At the beginning of the first verse all cosmic forces conspire in giving Indra the first rank, as a model for the similar honor and obeisance accorded him by men. But it quickly becomes apparent (vss. 2–3) that Indra is also an object of contention and competition among different groups of men, who all want him on their side. This contention is vividly depicted in verse 3. In verses 4–5 Indra's own inclinations become apparent: he aids priests and sacrificers and chastises those without sacrifice. In verse 6 we announce our own sacrifice to Indra, and thereby make a claim for his attention, and in verse 7 we ask for further aid against our rivals and ill-wishers.

1. Because to Indra the lordly Heaven has ever bowed, and to Indra the great Earth has bowed with her expanses—at the winning of heavenly brilliance with her expanses—
Indra have all the gods in concert placed in front.
To Indra let all the pressings belong that stem from the sons of Manu—all the gifts that stem from the sons of Manu.
2. Because at all pressings those of bullish fervor thrust you forward, (each of them) separately (thrusts you who are) one and the same—those seeking to win the sun, (each) separately—
you, like a boat of deliverance, we would place at the chariot-pole of our forceful (song),
making Indra take notice (of us) with our sacrifices as the Āyus did—as the Āyus did Indra with their praises.

3. Those seeking aid, paired in opposition, have yanked you back and forth, at the winning of the cowpen, as they set (the cows) free—being victorious (over the cowpen), as they set (them) free, o Indra—
   when you shove together the two peoples who are seeking cows and going to (the winning of) the sun,
   as you constantly display the bull partnered with (you)—the mace partnered with (you), Indra.
4. The Pūrus know of this manly deed of yours, o Indra, that you brought down the autumnal strongholds—being victorious you brought them down.
   You will chastise the mortal without sacrifice, o Indra, lord of strength.
   You stole the great earth (from him) and these waters—being exhilarated, (you stole) these waters.
5. Since then they have constantly celebrated this manly deed of yours at the revels: that, o bull, you aided the fire-priests—that you aided those acting as comrades.
   You made "Game," for them to prevail in battles.
   They kept winning one river after another—seeking fame they kept winning.
6. And now take note of this dawn—for one should enjoy it—of our chant, of our oblation along with our invocations—at the winning of the sun, along with our invocations.
   When, o Indra, possessor of the mace, as bull you will have in view to smash the negligent ones,
   (listen) to me, this newer ritual adept—listen to the thought of (me), the newer one.
7. You, powerfully born Indra, grown strong, being kindly toward us: (smash) the mortal who acts the foe—that mortal, o champion, with your mace—
   smash (him and) whoever wishes us ill. Listen to (us), as the one who listens best.
   Let malevolence stay away, like an accident on a journey—let all malevolence stay away.

I.132 Indra

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
6 verses: atyaṣṭi

This short hymn contains many puzzles of detail, which render much of the translation provisional, but the general theme is fairly clear. The present time and the current sacrifice are repeatedly highlighted (see, e.g., vss. 1–2), and the contrast between now and the past is explicitly drawn (see vss. 3–4). As is usual when past

and present are invoked together, we ask Indra to aid us in the same way as he aided his companions in myth, particularly, here, the Aṅgirases at the opening of the Vala cave (vs. 4). The theme of speech, both by and about Indra, is also strongly highlighted, especially in the first four verses.

1. With you, bounteous Indra, aided by you, may we overcome those who do battle over the foremost stakes—may we win against those who seek to win.
   On this, the nearest day speak on behalf of the soma-presser.
   At this sacrifice may we pull out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the match—seeking the prize, (may we pull out) the perfect one at the match.
2. At the match to win the sun, at the speech of the Propitiator, at the very anointing of the one who wakes at dawn [=Agni]—at the very anointing of the one being prepared [=soma]—
   on (that) day Indra is to be invoked by every head [=person], in the way that is known.
   Toward us only let your gifts be directed—the auspicious gifts of the auspicious one.
3. This pleasurable offering of yours is glittering as of old, when at the sacrifice they [=sacrificers] made (you), the shield, as a peaceful dwelling for themselves—you are the shield of truth, a peaceful dwelling.
   You should announce this now yet again. They [=poets?] look within (themselves?) with the (coming of) the (sun's) rays [=dawn].
   "This Indra is certainly known as a seeker of cows—as a seeker of cows for those who dwell among their kindred."
4. Now in the current way and in the earlier one it is to be proclaimed of you, that you opened up the enclosure for the Aṅgirases—o Indra, doing your best, (you opened) up the enclosure.
   In the same way as for them, win and fight for us.
   For those who press soma, weaken anyone who follows no commandment—who follows no commandment, even when he rages.
5. When the champion makes the peoples see in accord with his conceptions, seeking fame they will surpass when the prize is set—seeking fame they will distinguish themselves.
   To him they chant, for him to thrust (to them) with his strength a (full) lifetime along with offspring.
   In Indra do our thoughts desire to establish their home—our thoughts (going) as if to the gods.
6. You two, Indra and "Mountain" [=mace], who fight in the front—whoever would give battle to us, smash that very one away—with a mace smash that very one.

(Under these circumstances, even) an abyss will be pleasing to (that one,)
who has fled into the distance—an abyss he will seek to reach.
O champion, (surround) our rivals all around on all sides—let the
splitter split (them) on all sides.

I.133 Indra

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
7 verses: triṣṭubh 1, anuṣṭubh 2–4, gāyatrī 5, dhṛti [atyaṣṭi] 6, atyaṣṭi 7

This metrically complex hymn is the last one in the Paruchepa Indra cycle and is longer by one verse than the preceding hymn (I.132). It also falls naturally into two parts on the grounds of meter, subject matter, and diction: verses 1–5, which are mostly in dimeter meter and have an Atharvan cast, and verses 6–7 in atyaṣṭi (or modified atyaṣṭi) meter, which more nearly resembles the atyaṣṭi hymns earlier in the cycle. As Oldenberg already saw, we can thus analyze it as two hymns, of five and two verses respectively, which then conform to the usual patterns of arrangement.

The first hymn contains a number of odd formations, whose meaning and etymology are unclear; our renderings are provisional. Despite these uncertainties, we can happily grasp the gusto with which the poet urges Indra to destroy troops of witches and other demonic beings.

The second short hymn also enthusiastically rouses Indra against enemies, but in a style more recognizably Ṛgvedic, and it situates the action in the interplay between the soma-pressing sacrificer and Indra, the recipient of the soma and the sacrifice.

1. Both world-halves I purify with truth; the deceits—great, but lacking
Indra—I burn up entirely,
where the enemies, having attacked, lay slain, crushed all around the
Place of Hostility.
2. You also having attacked, o possessor of the stone: cut off the heads of
the witches
with your foot that overcomes obstacles—with your foot that overcomes
great obstacles.
3. Bounteous one, smash down the troop of these witches
at the mudflat (called) Place of Hostility—at the mudflat (called) Place
of Great Hostility.
4. When you scattered afar thrice fifty of them with your attacks,
this (deed?) of yours displays your zeal—this little (deed?) of yours
displays your zeal.
5. Pulverize the tawny-spiked, ballsy Piśāci entirely, Indra.
Tear down every demon.

6. Dash the great ones downward, Indra; listen to us. For heaven has blazed like the earth with fear, o possessor of the stone—as if with fear of (the sun's) heat, o possessor of the stone.
   As the most tempestuous one, you speed with your tempestuous, powerful weapons of death,
   smashing those who are not men, o unopposable champion, along with your warriors—o champion, along with your thrice seven warriors.
7. For the one who presses soma wins the dwelling place of profusion; for by pressing, he dashes hatreds down through sacrifice—(dashes) down hatreds toward the gods.
   Just by pressing, he desires to win thousands, as an unobstructable competitor.
   To the presser Indra gives what is ready to hand—he gives the wealth that is ready to hand.

I.134 Vāyu

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
6 verses: atyaṣṭi

As in most Vāyu hymns, the overriding focus here is on Vāyu's journey to the early-morning sacrifice and his right to drink first of the soma. The setting of the hymn at dawn is conveyed by verses 3–4, and the priestly gifts that are distributed at this morning ritual are alluded to in verses 1–3.

1. Let the speedy ones, hastening, convey you here to the pleasurable offering, o Vāyu, to drink first—to drink first of the soma.
   Let Liberality stand upright following your intention, recognizing it.
   On a chariot with a team drive here for giving—o Vāyu, for the giving of bounty.
2. Let the invigorating drops invigorate you, Vāyu, as they are being prepared by us, well-prepared, heaven-bound—being prepared with cows [=milk], heaven-bound.
   When his help, being prepared in order to succeed, follows his skill,
   our teams, our poetic thoughts are directed toward a single goal, toward giving—our poetic thoughts call upon him [=Vāyu] (for giving).
3. Vāyu yokes his chestnut pair, Vāyu his ruddy pair, Vāyu the two nimble ones to the chariot, to the chariot-pole to pull—the best pullers to the chariot-pole to pull.
   Awaken Plenitude, as a lover awakens her who sleeps.
   Reveal the two world-halves; make the dawns shine—for fame make the dawns shine.

4. For you do the gleaming dawns stretch their auspicious garments in the distance, into the houses at the rays (of the sun)—their brilliant (garments) at the new rays.
   For you will the milk-cow, milking her juice, milk out all good things.
   You begat the Maruts from the belly—from the belly of heaven.
5. For you do the glittering, gleaming, rapid, strong ones [=soma drinks / horses] set themselves aquiver at the revels—(like waves) of the waters they set themselves aquiver.
   You does the stealthy (hunter), as he wearies, reverently invoke for good fortune in his swooping pursuit.
   You drink before every creature by statute—you drink because of your lordship by statute.
6. You, Vāyu, with no one ahead, have first right to the drinking of these soma drinks of ours—you have the right to the drinking of these pressings.
   And of the clans with their vying oblations who have twisted (you toward them)—
   all their milk-cows have milked out the milk-mixture for you—have milked out the ghee and the milk-mixture.

I.135 Vāyu (1–3, 9), Indra and Vāyu (4–8)

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
9 verses: atyaṣṭi, except aṣṭi 7–8, arranged in tr̥cas

The second of Paruchepa's Vāyu hymns is longer than the first, and presumably originally consisted of three hymns, corresponding to the tr̥ca divisions. For most of its length it is preoccupied with the usual themes of Vāyu hymns: Vāyu's journey to the sacrifice with his many teams and his right to the first drink of soma at the Morning Pressing. The first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) is an invitation to Vāyu alone; the second (vss. 4–6), thematically and verbally parallel to the first, is addressed to Vāyu and Indra, who share the second soma oblation at the Morning Pressing.

The last tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) is less straightforward. The first of its verses (7) seems to describes an ongoing sacrifice to which Vāyu and Indra are traveling, a journey continued in the first part of verse 8. And the fortunate results of the successful sacrifice are described at the end of verse 8, the thriving of stock and agriculture. But in between is the mention of a mysterious fig tree. The final verse (9) is even more mysterious, with its unidentified oxen of paradoxical movement and habits. Since the vocabulary is reminiscent of the Marut lexicon, the oxen may be the Maruts, and the association of Vāyu (Wind) with the thunderstorm may be depicted. The passage also reminds us of the mysterious oxen in I.105.10, which may be astronomical

phenomena. And, of course, in a hymn focused on the soma sacrifice, any unidentified referent may be the soma drinks.

1. The ritual grass is strewn. Drive up to us, to pursue it, with a thousandfold team, o teamster—with hundredfold (teams), o teamster—
for the gods have conceded to you, the god, to drink first.
The pressed, honeyed (soma drinks) have been set forth for you—have been set forth for your exhilaration and for your resolve.
2. For you has this soma been purified all around by the stones; clothing himself in coveted (garments) he rushes around the cask—clothing himself in gleaming (garments) he rushes.
For you is this portion poured among the Āyus, is the soma poured among the gods.
Travel, Vāyu; drive to our teams [=poetic thoughts], seeking us—drive at your pleasure, seeking us.
3. With your hundredfold teams drive here to our ceremony, with thousandfold ones to pursue it—o Vāyu, to pursue our oblations.
Yours is this portion at its proper time, accompanying the reins [=rays] when the sun (rises).
Being carried, they have been guided by the Adhvaryus—o Vāyu, the gleaming (soma drinks) have been guided.

4. The chariot with its team will convey you two here for aid, to pursue the well-placed pleasurable offerings—o Vāyu, to pursue the oblations.
Drink of the honey of the stalk, for the first drinking was established for you two.
O Vāyu, you two come here with shimmering bounty—and Indra, you two come here with bounty.
5. Our thoughts should turn you two hither to our ceremonies; they keep grooming this drop, the prizewinner—(the drop) swift like a prizewinning steed.
Drink of these (soma drinks), seeking us; come here to us with help.
O Indra and Vāyu, (drink) of them, pressed by stones, you two—(drink) to exhilaration, you two prize-givers.
6. These soma drinks were pressed here in the waters for you two. Being carried, they have been guided by the Adhvaryus—o Vāyu, the gleaming (soma drinks) have been guided.
They have surged toward you two, swift across the filter,
seeking you two beyond the sheep's fleece—the soma drinks beyond the sheep's (fleece).

7. O Vāyu, drive beyond sleeper after sleeper. Where the pressing stone speaks, you two go there—(you) and Indra, go to that house.
Liberality has been sighted; the ghee is flowing. With a full team you two drive to the ceremony—(you) and Indra drive to the ceremony.

8. Just now you two travel to the poured offering of honey. The victorious ones [=soma drinks? Maruts?] that approach the fig tree—let these be victorious for us.
   All at once the cows give birth and the grain ripens; the milk-cows do not give out for you, o Vāyu—the milk-cows do not give up.
9. Here, o Vāyu, are those oxen of yours [=soma drinks? Maruts?], arm-strong, which fly in the river—the oxen that are greatly arrogant—
   that are not swift though on dry land, yet are nimble in the mountains though their home is not there,
   like the reins [=rays] of the sun difficult to hold back—difficult for the hands to hold back.

I.136 Mitra and Varuṇa

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
7 verses: atyaṣṭi, except triṣṭubh 7

Though the paired divinities Mitra and Varuṇa dominate this hymn, they have plenty of Ādityan company: Aryaman in verses 2, 3, 5, 6; Bhaga in verses 2 and 6; their mother Aditi in verse 3. And as the hymn nears its conclusion there are non-Ādityan gods as well: Indra and Agni in verses 6–7, the Maruts in verse 7. The hymn is defined by a ring formed by verses 1 and 6 (vs. 7 is in a different meter and extra-hymnic), with matches of key words in both verses: "lofty," "reverence," "compassionate," and "approach with praise."

Unlike many Mitra and Varuṇa hymns, the focus here is not on their ethical role, but on their status as receivers of sacrificial offerings. The rising sun in verse 2 (see also vs. 3) suggests the Morning Pressing, where Mitra and Varuṇa are among the dual divinities who receive a joint cup of soma. The position of the hymn, immediately following two hymns to Vāyu, the first recipient of soma at the Morning Pressing, supports this view.

1. Present preeminent, lofty reverence to the two attentive ones; present an oblation, a thought to the two compassionate ones—the sweetest (oblation) to the two compassionate ones.
   They are the two sovereign kings, whose potion is ghee, approached with praise at every sacrifice.
   And so the dominion of these two is not to be challenged from anywhere—their divinity is never to be challenged.
2. The way has appeared—a wider one for the wide (light); its path has been firmly guided by the reins of truth—its eye by the reins of Bhaga.
   Heaven-dominating is the seat of Mitra and of Aryaman and Varuṇa.
   And so they two assume lofty vigor, worthy of hymns—lofty vigor to be approached with praise.

3. Light-filled, sunlit Aditi who upholds the communities do the two accompany every day—being wakeful every day.
   Light-filled dominion do they acquire—the two Ādityas, lords of the drop.
   Of these two Mitra (is the one who by nature) sets the peoples in order, but Varuṇa (does as well)—(also) Aryaman sets the peoples in order.
4. Let the one here, this soma, be most wealful for Mitra and Varuṇa, the one who gives shares in the drinking places—the god who gives shares to the gods.
   Him should the gods enjoy, all of them today in joint enjoyment.
   O kings, you shall do just as we beg—you truthful ones, as we beg.
5. The person who has done honor to Mitra and Varuṇa, that unassailable one do you two protect all around from difficult straits—the pious mortal from difficult straits.
   Him Aryaman guards, him who aims straight following his commandment,
   him who with hymns tends to the commandment of these two—with praises tends to their commandment.
6. Reverence I proclaim to lofty heaven, to the two world-halves, to Mitra and to Varuṇa who gives rewards—to the very compassionate one who gives rewards.
   Approach Indra and Agni, heaven-dominating Aryaman and Bhaga with praise.
   Living for a long time may we be accompanied by progeny—may we be accompanied by the aid of Soma.
7. With the aid of the gods, with Indra on our side along with the Maruts, might we consider ourselves self-glorious.
   Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa will extend shelter; may we attain it—we and the bounteous ones.

I.137 Mitra and Varuṇa

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
3 verses: atiśakvarī

Short and relatively simple, this hymn continues the ritual focus of the previous hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa. The pressed soma in its various forms, the gods' journey to our sacrifice, and the time, sunrise, are its only topics. For some reason, the hymn has attracted more than its share of scorn: Renou (*EVP* VII: 33) calls it "assez banale et facile," and Gonda (1975: 212) classifies it among hymns that are "banal, mediocre or devoid of a deeper meaning." Perhaps the lack of the high moral tone found in most Mitra and Varuṇa hymns aggrieved these commentators, but taken on its own terms, with its rollicking rhythm and restricted phraseology, it makes a pleasant impression.

1. We have pressed—you two, drive hither—with the stones; these exhilarating ones here are mixed with cows [=milk]—these exhilarating soma drinks.
   You two kings, touching heaven, come here right to us, into our midst.
   These with their milk mixture are for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa—the clear soma drinks and those with their milk mixture.
2. Here—you two, drive hither—are the drops, the soma drinks mixed with curds—the pressings mixed with curds.
   And at the waking of the dawn, simultaneous with the rays of the sun,
   it is pressed for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa, for drinking—the pleasing one (pressed) for truth and for drinking.
3. This plant, like a dawn cow, do they milk for you two with the stones—the soma they milk with the stones.
   Come here right to us, into our midst, nearby, to drink the soma.
   Here it is, pressed by men for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa—the soma pressed for drinking.

I.138 Pūṣan

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
4 verses: atyaṣṭi

This hymn lacks the colloquial tone and idiomatic style of most Pūṣan hymns. Instead, as befits the elaborate meter, this is high-register praise, with a somewhat bombastic and overblown edge and contorted syntax.

The poet is especially concerned to establish "fellowship" (*sakhyá*, vss. 2–4) with the god—fellowship that will bring wealth and aid along with it.

1. Ever further is (the greatness) of powerfully born Pūṣan proclaimed: the greatness of him, the powerful, does not flag—the praise of him does not flag.
   Seeking his favor, I chant to him, whose help is nearby, who is refreshment itself,
   who, the bounteous, has bound to himself the mind of everyone—the bounteous god has bound it to himself.
2. So, Pūṣan, with praises I put you forward, like a nimble (horse) on its course, so that you will get the negligent ones on the move—like a camel you will carry (us) beyond the negligent ones.
   When I, a mortal, call upon you, a god, who are refreshment itself, for fellowship—
   make *our* songs brilliant—make them brilliant when prizes (are at stake).

3. Pūṣan, since in fellowship with you your admirers who have just this
   purpose have benefitted by your aid—have benefitted with such a
   purpose (as ours)—
   in accordance with this we implore you for a newer team of wealth.
   O you who are not wrathful, who are widely proclaimed, be a
   contender—whenever a prize (is at stake), be a contender.
4. Will you come near to us, for the winning of this ("team" of wealth), you
   who have goats for horses, who are not wrathful but bestowing—you
   who have goats for horses, (for the benefit) of those who seek fame?
   We would turn you hither with praises that achieve their goal,
   wondrous one,
   for I do not disdain you, glowing Pūṣan, nor do I spurn your fellowship.

I.139 All Gods

Paruchepa Daivodāsi
11 verses: atyaṣṭi, except bṛhatī 5, triṣṭubh 11

This complex hymn presents many interpretational difficulties, though it roughly follows the model of the Praügaśastra, a recitation at the Morning Pressing found also in Ṛgveda I.2–3, I.23, and II.41. The order of divinities in the Praügaśastra is Vāyu, Indra and Vāyu, Mitra and Varuṇa, the Aśvins, Indra, the All Gods, and Sarasvatī; this hymn follows this order through verse 6: Indra and Vāyu (vs. 1), Mitra and Varuṇa (vs. 2), the Aśvins (vss. 3–5), Indra (vs. 6), but ends with Agni (vs. 7), the Maruts (vs. 8), Indra and Agni (vs. 9), and Bṛhaspati (vs. 10), with verse 11 in a different meter and addressed to all the gods collectively.

The ritual situation is established at the very beginning, with the quotation of a familiar sacrificial formula *ástu śrauṣaṭ*, found all over middle Vedic ritual texts. This ritual-internal quotation is matched, in ring-compositional style, by the quotation of a *praiṣa*, or ritual command to the Hotar, in verse 10, the last real verse of the hymn. It is also clear that the time is early morning (see esp. vs. 4, though there are also more oblique indications in the first two verses), and that the sound of the pressing stones is calling the gods to the sacrifice (see vs. 3, and its ring-compositional echo in vs. 10).

As so often, the difficulties in the hymn may stem in part from the fact that the poet is reflecting on his poetic lineage and calling. The obscure reference to the "umbilical tie" or "navel" in verse 1 is made somewhat clearer by verse 9, in which the poet asserts that his "umbilical ties" are with a series of earlier seers and sacrificers, including Manu—whose own ties are to the gods. He thus provides himself with a poetic pedigree and in following their track, or model, produces his own hymns that have some chance of reaching the gods, since his predecessors' did. In verse 1 he mentions only one such predecessor: Vivasvant (lit., "possessing the

shining forth"), who in later Vedic and even in late Ṛgveda (Vālakh., VIII.52.1) is considered the father of Manu and who is often associated, as a proto-priest, with the pressing of soma. (His Avestan correspondent Vīvaŋuuaṇt is the first man who pressed haoma [Y 9.4].) So in verse 1 our poet proclaims that he is beginning a new hymn, by newly attaching himself to a legendary seer-sacrificer. But there is another likely meaning there as well: Vivasvant is identified as the sun in later Vedic, and quite possibly in some passages in the Ṛgveda as well, and therefore the poet may also be making reference to the time of "shining forth," namely early morning.

The double reference to ritual poetry and to dawn continues in verse 2. Mitra and Varuṇa take "untruth away from truth," thus enabling the poet and his peers to see the gods' golden throne. On the one hand, the untruth can be darkness, and the removal of this darkness reveals the sun. On the other hand, the priests see this vision with their insights and their mind, and though they also see with their eyes, these are the "eyes of soma," presumably the vision arising from drinking the soma. So on another level of interpretation what they see is a *poetic* vision.

The three Aśvins verses (3–5) are fairly clear descriptions of the journey of those gods to the dawn sacrifice, and the invitation to Indra (vs. 6) is also straightforward, as is the praise of the Maruts (vs. 8). This clarity is unfortunately obscured in verse 7, whose translation is only provisional, though the direct speech of Agni is quite intriguing. He seems to be chiding the gods for having given the Aṅgirases a cow they (or in most interpretations, Aryaman and unspecified others) have milked out. From the mythological point of view, the cow should represent the cows imprisoned in the Vala cave that the Aṅgirases helped to liberate. In a ritual context this could be the cow that provides the milk to mix with soma; in a poetic context the poetic insight or vision that provided the Aṅgirases with songs. The role of Aryaman here is entirely unclear.

As noted above, in verse 9 the poet situates himself in the poetic and sacrificial tradition, and in verse 10, another obscure verse (Geldner calls it "unintelligible" [unverständlich]), the ritual and poetic ring is closed.

1. (Cry) "Let it be; he will hear." I place Agni in front through my insight.
   Now we choose that heavenly troop—we choose Indra and Vāyu.
   Since our (umbilical tie) has been effectively bound anew to the umbilical
   tie in Vivasvant's (sphere),
   then let our thoughts go forth—our thoughts (going) as if to the gods.
2. Since, Mitra and Varuṇa, you took untruth away from truth by your own
   fervor—by your own fervor of skill—
   just in this way among the seats we saw the golden (throne) of you two,
   just with our insights and with our mind, with our own eyes—with our
   own eyes of soma.
3. O Aśvins, the Āyus, seeking the gods, with their praise songs are causing
   you two to hear, as if making the signal-call (of the pressing stone)
   heard—the Āyus (are causing) you two (to hear) about the oblations.

In you two are all splendors and nourishments, o you who grant all possessions.
The wheel-rims on your golden one spray (honey)—on your golden chariot, wondrous ones.

4. It has appeared, wondrous ones: you two unclose the firmament; your chariot-horses are yoked at the rituals of daybreak—the unbesmirched ones at the rituals of daybreak.
   Your station is on your chariot box, on your golden chariot, wondrous ones—
   (you two) going as if on a path, directing (the chariot) through the dusky realm—directing (it) straightway through the dusky realm.
5. With your powers, you two whose goods are powers, favor us by day and by night.
   Let your giving never give out—let your giving never give out from us.
6. O bull Indra—these pressed drops, the drink of a bull, pressed by the stones, are bursting out—for you are the pressed (drops) bursting out.
   Let them invigorate you to giving, to great, glittering generosity.
   Being praised with songs, you whose vehicle is songs, come here—very compassionate to us, come here.
7. Listen to us, Agni: Reverently invoked, you will say to the gods worthy of the sacrifice—to the kings worthy of the sacrifice:
   "Since, gods, you have given this milk-cow to the Aṅgirases,
   they milk her dry. Aryaman is in partnership with the performer [=Agni/priest]—he knows her (too), in partnership with me [=Agni]."
8. Let these manly deeds of yours not get old because of us, and let the brilliant deeds not age—let them not age before us.
   What glittering, immortal (deed) of yours shall sound anew in every generation,
   o Maruts, fix that firm in us as well as (brilliance) difficult to surpass—and what is difficult to surpass.
9. Dadhyañc, the earlier Aṅgiras, Priyamedha, Kaṇva, Atri, and Manu know my birth—these earlier ones and Manu know mine.
   Their attachment is to the gods; our umbilical ties are to them [=ancient seers].
   (Following) along their track I bend (them) here greatly with a song—I bend Indra and Agni here with a song.
10. (Crying) "The Hotar-priest shall sacrifice," he wins what is choice of the wooden (cup) [=soma]. Bṛhaspati the seeker sacrifices with the bulls [=soma drinks?]—with the bulls with their many choice gifts.
    By ourselves we have grasped the signal-call of the pressing-stone signaling its intentions afar.

The very resolute one upheld the fittings [?]—the very resolute one (upheld) the many seats.

11. O gods, the eleven of you who are in heaven, the eleven who are on the earth,
    the eleven who dwell in the waters in their greatness—(all) of you, gods, take pleasure in this sacrifice here.

Hymns I.140–164 are attributed to Dīrghatamas, the son of Ucatha, who calls himself Māmateya, the son of Mamatā, in I.147.3, 152.6, and 158.6. The name Dīrghatamas means the one "of long darkness." The Bṛhaddevatā IV.14–15 (Macdonell) explains that he received this name because he was born blind, and the poet himself refers to his blindness in I.147.3. According to the Bṛhaddevatā his sight was later restored by the gods. His name is also an appropriate reflection of the difficulty of many of his hymns. His affection for word play, symbolic language, syntactic anomaly, and ambiguous reference makes his hymns distinctive, original, and often highly elusive. He is one of the most challenging, but at the same time one of the most interesting poets of the Ṛgveda.

His hymns also present an unusual sequence of divinities. The list begins conventionally enough with I.140–150, which are dedicated to Agni, but the ordinarily expected series to Indra is missing. Instead 151–153 are to Mitra and Varuṇa, 154–156 to Viṣṇu or to Viṣṇu and Indra, 157–158 to the Aśvins, 159–160 to Heaven and Earth, and 161 to the Ṛbhus. Then 162 and 163 are praises of the sacrificial horse, and 164, the climax of the collection, is a very long and very puzzling riddle hymn, which explores the mysteries of several Vedic rites. The second Aśvin hymn, I.158, is of particular interest because it is ostensibly an autobiographical hymn, composed when the poet was an old man and on the verge of being pushed aside. Partly on the basis of this hymn Bṛhaddevatā IV.21–25 gives a second legend that his servants tried to drown Dīrghatamas. But he floated downstream and was rescued in Aṅga where he married and then gave birth to the poet Kakṣīvant.

I.140 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
13 verses: jagatī, except jagatī or triṣṭubh 10, triṣṭubh 12–13

This first hymn in the Dīrghatamas cycle is bristling with difficulties in detail, although it remains focused on its central topic, the kindling and spread of the fire. The first two verses establish the ritual scene, with the ritual fire sitting on (or at) the vedi, the "altar" that is really a dug-out depression in the ground on the axis between the eastern and western ritual fires, and with the poet's presentation of his "thought" (a praise hymn) as clothing for the ritual fire. But natural fire, which spreads through the woods and devours them, is also referred to, especially in verse 2.

The chronological description of the kindling and growth of fire begins in verse 3 with a vivid depiction of the kindling sticks and the first faint stirrings of smoke and fire. The growing power of the fire and the swiftness of the spread of its flames, imagined as horses in verse 4, occupy the next verses (4–10). Fire's burning of the plants that stoke it is given an erotic cast in verses 6–8, aided by the fact that several words for "plant" are feminine in gender. Their very destruction by fire is also envisioned as a transformation into a better and more vigorous form (see esp. vss. 7cd–8).

The prayers for aid and material goods begin in verse 10, on behalf not only of a generic "us" but especially mentioning our patrons (vss. 10, 12) and others of our circle (vs. 12). One striking request is for a metaphorical boat to deliver us to the far shore of difficulty (vs. 12); the boat is described in some detail, including its possession of a foot or feet. We wonder if this refers to some sort of primitive keel or centerboard, which would probably be helpful to ensure that the boat make it across the current of a swift-flowing river. Unfortunately our knowledge of ancient Indian naval architecture is not sufficient to decide.

1. To him sitting on the altar, the very bright one whose domain is dear—to Agni bear forth his womb like a wellspring (of nourishment).
   As if with a garment, clothe the blazing one with a thought—the smiter of darkness whose chariot is of light, whose color is blazing bright.
2. Having two births, he stretches toward the threefold food. In a year what was eaten (by him) has grown again.
   With the mouth and the tongue of one (of his forms) he is a thoroughbred bull; with the other he drags down the trees (like) an elephant.
3. Plunging into the black, jerking back and forth, both his mothers [=kindling sticks], sharing the same abode, move athwart each other toward their child—
   to him, producing smoke, his tongues stretching forward, stirring thirstily, quivering, worthy to be attended upon, the increaser of his father [=priest].
4. For Manu and the offspring of Manu to come they are harnessed—the speedy (horses) seeking to break free, running fast, drawing black furrows,
   quick, racing fast, breaking ranks, sped by the wind, swift.
5. After that do these (flames) of his, producing smoke, rise at will, making and remaking a black void and a great form,
   while he goes forth, stroking the great (earth) as his streambed, snorting, thundering, constantly roaring.
6. He who, like a busy attendant, keeps bending over the brown (females [=plants])—he goes toward (them) like a bull to his wives, constantly bellowing.

And, showing his power, he beautifies their [?] bodies. Like a fearsome (bull), the one difficult to grasp keeps shaking his horns.

7. He masses together those spread asunder and those close-packed [=plants]. Recognizing the (females) just as they recognize him, he lies in his own (place).
 They grow again; they approach divinity. They make for themselves a form different from their parents, (though) in company with them.
8. For the long-haired spinsters embrace him; despite having died, they stand erect (to go) forth once again for Āyu [=Agni?].
 Removing their old age, he goes constantly roaring, generating a further living life-force (for them?), which cannot be laid low.
9. Licking all around his mother's [=earth's] over-garment, he drives across the expanse with his powerfully spirited warriors,
 producing vigor for the footed, while licking and licking always. The white (track of ash) follows along his tracks.
10. Shine upon our bounteous (patrons), o Agni. Then as the snorting bull, the master of the household,
 *having set loose the females who have young [=flames], you have shone, ever flickering and enveloping like armor in battles.
11. Let this well-formed (thought) be dearer to you than one poorly formed, o Agni, and dearer to you even than your own dear thought.
 With what of your body shines blazing bright you will win treasure for us.
12. For our chariot and for our house, o Agni, give us a boat with built-in oars and a foot [=keel? rudder?],
 which will carry our heroes and our bounteous (patrons) and our peoples to the further shore and which (will be) our shelter.
13. O Agni, may you welcome just our recitation, (as may) heaven and earth, and the rivers, which sing their own praises
 as they go toward an abundance of cattle and of grain through the long days. The ruddy (dawns/cattle?) will choose refreshment as their boon (for us?).

I.141 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
13 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12–13

Like the last hymn, this one is full of puzzles, and also like the last, it focuses especially on the birth and growth of the fire. The hymn begins and ends with the installation of the ritual fire (root *dhā*: 1ab, 13ab), providing a faint ring structure; the second mention of its installation, with the adverb *pratarám* "further

forward," suggests that it refers to the installation of the new Āhavanīya fire to the east, a fire removed from the old Āhavanīya at the beginning of classical śrauta rituals.

The first few verses cryptically describe the various forms of fire (vs. 2) and their production (vss. 3–4). The means of production are at first mythical or metaphorical, but in the second half of verse 4 the more familiar ritual churning of the fire is described, followed by his growth and rapid and unpredictable movement (vss. 5–8; see also vs. 1c). This type of erratic movement is iconically mirrored with extraordinary skill by our poet Dīrghatamas, who models it with abrupt changes of tense and a deliberate disregard for the usual matching of syntax and verse structure. In our reading there are enjambments across verses in 3–4, 4–5, and 6–7, with sentence breaks in verse-interior in 4, 5, 6—a very rare conjunction of syntactic anomalies. The vertiginous effect of piling clause upon clause and image upon image is especially marked in the sequence beginning with 6b and lasting through 7—giving us a faint whiff of the Gerard Manley Hopkins of "The Windhover," which models a bird's flight with verbal means.

The rest of the hymn is somewhat more conventional, beginning with verse 9, where Agni is addressed for the first time in the 2nd person. Until then not only is the hymn couched entirely in the 3rd person, but the word *agní* is entirely absent, either as the name of the god or as a designation of the natural substance fire. Verses 9–10 describe Agni's contributions to the welfare of both men and gods, while verses 12–13 express hopes for further help and summarize the hymn itself. But even here, in verse 11 the poet plots a meandering syntactic and conceptual course starting from the "good fortune" (*bhága*) desired to be acquired in 10d and amplified in the first half of verse 11 to a pun on the god's name Bhaga, with a rich set of images, a clashing set of objects to the verb "hold fast," and a covert syntactic transformation of that very verb at the end of the verse.

All in all, a tour de force of virtuosity.

1. Yes, indeed! It is just so: the luster of the god, lovely to see, has been installed for wonder, after he was born of strength.
   When he zigzags up to it, our thought goes straight to success. Flowing together, the streams of truth have led (him).
2. Abounding in food, he lies in his own (place) as the wondrous form of nourishment; his second (wondrous form lies) here among the mothers, sevenfold kindly.
   His third (wondrous form, that) of the bull to be milked, have the young women begotten—him of tenfold forethought.
3. When the patrons, showing mastery through their power, bring him forth from the depth, from the form of a buffalo,
   when Mātariśvan churns him who, as from olden days, is in hiding in the mixing vessel of the honey,

4. When he is led forth from his highest father, he mounts the nourishment-bringing plants in the houses,
   when the two [=kindling sticks] set his birth in motion. Just after that the youngest one became blazing with heat;
5. Just after that he entered into his mothers, within whom the blazing one (stayed) without suffering harm. He grew widely in all directions,
   when he mounted the previous ones [=plants] who spurred (him) on from of old. He races down into the newer, later ones.
6. Just after that they choose (him as) their Hotar at the rituals of daybreak. As if gorging themselves on good fortune, they steer straight (to him),
   since he, much praised, with resolve and with might always pursues the gods and the laud (of) mortals in order to suckle them,
7. When he, worthy of the sacrifice, has spread out, driven by the wind, wriggling through the old (plants?) like a twisting (snake), unconfined
   in his flight—(the flight) of this burning one of black plumage and blazing birth, whose road spreads through the airy realm.
8. Like a driving-chariot made by dexterous (men), he speeds toward heaven with ruddy limbs.
   After that these black (plumes) of his, the patrons of the burning one, retreat from his turbulent flaring, as (from that) of a champion, like birds (from that) *of the sun.
9. By means of you, o Agni, have those rich in drops [/gifts] become exultant—Varuṇa whose commandments are upheld, Mitra, and Aryaman—
   since, following them, you were born extending everywhere by your resolve, encompassing (everything) like a felly its spokes.
10. You, o Agni, impel treasure and the conclave of the gods to the man who labors and presses soma, o youngest one.
    Might we now acquire [/install] you anew, o young (son) of strength, like good fortune [/Bhaga] at the decisive moment, o you who have great treasure.
11. For us you will engorge good fortune [/Bhaga] like household wealth meant for a good purpose, like enduring skill,
    ([good fortune/] Bhaga) who will hold fast both races [=gods and men], like reins, (and also) the laud of gods, and (who himself), of good resolve, (is held fast) in truth.
12. And the bright-flashing, delighting Hotar with his lively horses and gleaming chariot will hear us.
    Without error Agni will lead us with the best leading to desirable safe passage, to a better state.

13. Agni has been praised with our energetic chants [/with his ardent flames], while being installed further forward for sovereign rule.
Both those who are our bounteous (patrons) and we (ourselves) would extend outward, as the sun (extends) beyond the mist.

I.142 Āprī (1–12), Indra (13)

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
13 verses: anuṣṭubh

Unlike Dīrghatamas's dense and dexterous Agni hymns among which this hymn is embedded, this Āprī hymn not only follows the set pattern of that genre, but, using the standard Āprī diction and tropes (for which see the introduction to I.13, as well as the general introduction, pp. 33, 63), does so without any perceptible tricks or poetic exuberance. Its only deviation from the norm is having thirteen verses rather than the usual eleven or twelve, by including both Tanūnapāt (vs. 2) and Narāśaṃsa (vs. 3) and by having two svāhā verses at the end (12–13). Dīrghatamas (if he is indeed the poet) seems to be treading water here.

1. *Kindled*, o Agni, convey the gods here today to the man with offering spoon extended.
Stretch the ancient thread for the pious man who has pressed soma.
2. O *Tanūnapāt*, measure out the ghee-filled, honey-filled
sacrifice of an inspired priest like me, of the pious man who labors.
3. Gleaming, pure, and unerring, *Narāśaṃsa* mixes the sacrifice with honey
three times a day—the god devoted to the sacrifice among the gods.
4. When *solemnly invoked*, o Agni, convey Indra here, brilliant and dear,
for this thought of mine is twisting its way toward you, o you who have good tongues.
5. They whose offering spoons are extended are strewing the *ritual grass* at the sacrifice with its good ceremonies;
I twist (the grass), which provides the broadest expanse to the gods and extensive shelter to Indra.
6. Let them gape open—the great ones who increase through truth—for the gods to come forth:
the purifying, much-desired, inexhaustible *Divine Doors*.
7. Being happy, let well-ornamented *Night and Dawn*,
the two youthfully exuberant mothers of truth, sit close together on the ritual grass.
8. Let the two *Divine Hotars*, poets possessing gladdening tongues and offering welcome,
perform this sacrifice for us today, (so it) reaches its goal and touches heaven.

9. Let gleaming *Hotrā Bhāratī* [/the Oblation of the Bharatas], fitted in her place among the gods, among the Maruts,
   (also) *Iḷā* and great *Sarasvatī,* (all) worthy of the sacrifice, sit on the ritual grass.
10. Let *Tvaṣṭar*, inclined toward us, for the sake of our thriving and wealth, unbind in our navel
   that unerring flow of semen as an abundant choice thing, abundant in itself.
11. Releasing (the sacrificial victim) to the gods, sacrifice to the gods by yourself, o *Lord of the Forest*.
   Agni sweetens the oblations, the wise god among the gods.
12. To Vāyu, accompanied by Pūṣan and the Maruts, by all the gods,
   and to Indra, pulsing with excitement from the songs, make oblation with the *svāhā-cry*.
13. Come here right up to the oblations made with the *svāhā-cry*, to pursue them.
   Indra, come! Hear our summons! You do they summon at the ceremony.

I.143 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8

The beginning and end of this hymn focus on the ritual fire and our relationship to it. The poet begins (vs. 1) by presenting to Agni what he has produced, characterized as an evolving product: an "insight...the thinking of my speech." The poet's concern with his insight returns toward the end (vss. 6–7), where it is hoped that Agni will pursue our speech and promote our insights. In between the hymn touches on many of the standard Agni tropes: for example, the beauty and radiance of the newly kindled fire (vss. 2–3) and its destructive power (vs. 5). It ends (vs. 8) by begging for Agni's protection.

1. I present a stronger, newer insight to Agni, the thinking of my speech to the son of strength,
   the Child of the Waters, who, together with the good ones [/Vasus], has sat down upon the earth as our dear Hotar at his season.
2. As he was being born in the highest distant heaven, Agni became manifest to Mātariśvan.
   By the resolve and the might of him as he was kindled, his blaze illuminated heaven and earth.
3. His are the dazzling, his the unaging radiant beams—he possessing a lovely appearance, a lovely face, a lovely flash.

The (beams) of Agni, with the energy of their radiance, are churning like rivers of the night, across (the nights), unsleeping, unaging.

4. The all-possessor whom the Bhr̥gus have aroused upon the navel of the earth, of the living world, in his greatness—
   Agni—urge him on with songs here in his own home, him who alone rules like Varuṇa over what is good.
5. Who is not to be hindered, like the roar of the Maruts, like an army unleashed, like a heavenly missile,
   with his sharp fangs Agni eats; he devours. Like a fighter his rivals, he bears down on the trees.
6. Surely Agni will be the pursuer of our speech? Surely the good one with the good ones [/Vasus] will grant our desire?
   Surely as a goad he would push our insights to win? I sing to him who has a blazing face with this insight.
7. The one who has kindled him for you all stretches toward ghee-faced Agni, sitting on the chariot-pole of truth, as if toward Mitra [/an ally].
   A foal [?] while being kindled, shining at the rites, he will raise up our insight, whose color is blazing bright.
8. Staying close, o Agni, protect us with your kindly, able protectors that stay close.
   With your undeceivable, undistracted, unwinking (protectors), o object of our quest, protect our kindred all around.

I.144 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
7 verses: jagatī

As in other of Dīrghatamas's Agni hymns, the kindling of the ritual fire provides the major theme of this hymn. In particular, the middle verses 3–5 concern the production of fire by the two churning sticks and the growing strength of that fire. The hymn begins, however, with the already fully matured fire, identified as the Hotar, going about his ritual duties (vss. 1–2). The verse immediately after the kindling verses (vs. 6) opens the ritual frame: Agni there is the ruler of the realms of heaven and earth, and he even attracts those divine figures (probably Heaven and Earth, though some have suggested Night and Dawn) from their cosmic positions to take their place on the ritual ground. The final verse (7) is a typical hymn-ending verse, commending the hymn just recited to Agni's enjoyment.

1. The Hotar goes forth to his duty with his craft, setting aloft our insight, which possesses blazing ornaments.

He strides toward the ladles turning in respectful circumambulation,
which first kiss his domain.

2. Those who produce the milk of truth [=streams of melted butter?] have bellowed to him—those surrounded on every side in the womb of the god, in his seat.
When, borne away, he dwelt in the lap of the waters, then he suckled upon his own powers by which he speeds.
3. The two of the same vigor [=fire-churning sticks] seek to keep hold of that marvelous form, constantly crossing each other in turn, toward the same goal;
after that he is to be invoked like Bhaga. He has been firmly held by us, as a chariot-driver holds firm the reins of a draft-horse.
4. He whom the two of the same vigor serve—that pair in the same womb, sharing the same dwelling—
the gray youth was born by day, not by night—he who roams unaging through many generations of the sons of Manu.
5. Our insights and our ten fingers urge him on. We mortals invoke the god for help.
From the high plain he sets the slopes in motion. With his advancing (flames?) he has established the new (ritual) patterns.
6. For in your own person, o Agni, you rule over the heavenly and the earthly (realm) like a herdsman.
These two lofty, dappled females [=Heaven and Earth? Night and Dawn?], excelling in splendor, golden, surging, have attained to your ritual grass.
7. O Agni, enjoy and delight in this speech—o gladdening one of independent power, born of truth, with strong resolve—
you, lovely to see, facing in every direction, who are delightful to the sight like a peaceful dwelling abounding in food.

I.145 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

The hymn begins with the peremptory (2nd pl.) command "Ask him!" In the first two verses Agni is depicted as the possessor of secret knowledge that we mortals beg him to impart to us and, in verses 2–3, as the god who is always attentive to the sacrifice whose success he ensures. A sample of his secret knowledge seems to be given in verse 4, a riddling and, at least for these translators, unsolved depiction of ritual activity. The final verse forms a ring with verse 1. It begins with a continuation of the riddling language of verse 4: the "wild beast of the waters" may be a reference to

Agni's identification with Apām Napāt ("Child of the Waters"), whose roaming in the woods refers to his burning of firewood. Once installed as the ritual fire in pāda b, Agni implicitly answers the questions asked of him in verses 1–2 in pāda c: he explains the ritual patterns to us. In the final pāda he is characterized by the same vocabulary as in verse 1: "knowing" (*vidvā́n*) matching "he knows (*veda*) of 1a; "perceiver of truth" ([*ṛta-*]*cít*) matching "the one who perceives" (*cikitvā́n*) of 1b.

1. Ask him: he has come; he knows. As the one who perceives, he is implored; he is now implored here.
   In him are our commands, in him our wishes [/offerings]. He is the lord of the victory prize and of unbridled power.
2. Just him do they ask, but he himself does not ask in turn, since, like a clever man, with his own mind he has grasped it.
   He does not forget the first nor the later word. Undistracted, he is accompanied by his resolve.
3. Just to him go the offering ladles; to him the mares [=streams of ghee?]. He alone will hear all my words.
   Enjoining many ritual commands, triumphant, bringing the sacrifice to success, offering uninterrupted help, (though) a child, he has taken on his ferocity entirely.
4. He proceeds in a reverential approach (to them) when they [=flames?] have raised themselves up together. Just born, he has crept together with the conjoined ones.
   He touches the swelling one for joy and delight, when the willing females [=streams of ghee?] go to him standing right there.
5. This wild beast of the waters that roams in the woods has been installed upon the uppermost skin.
   He has declared the (ritual) patterns to mortals—the knowing Agni. For he is the perceiver of truth who is really present (here).

I.146 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Dīrghatamas's usual preoccupation with the birth and growth of the ritual fire. In verse 1 Agni is seated in the lap of his two parents, in our opinion the fire-churning sticks, though they are not explicitly identified and other interpreters see the two as cosmic entities. (See I.140.3, 141.4, 144.3–4 for other allusions to these sticks in Dīrghatamas's Agni hymns.) The fire grows in verse 2 and is tended in verse 3. Unidentified duals are found in both verses; the ambiguity seems deliberate, allowing the pair to represent both the churning sticks in the ritual realm and

Night and Dawn (or Heaven and Earth) in the cosmic realm, as the diction referring to the pair becomes closer to that used especially of Night and Dawn elsewhere. After a somewhat enigmatic verse (4) sketching Agni's relationship with poets, the god is depicted as a birth-giver (using a word ordinarily appropriate only to the female at parturition)—thus bringing his life-cycle full circle, as it were, from birth to giving birth.

1. I will hymn three-headed, seven-reined Agni, who is without deficiency,
   seated in the lap of his parents [=fire-churning sticks],
   one (stick) that moves and one that stays firm—(Agni,) who has filled all
   the luminous realms of heaven.
2. The great young bull has grown upon the two (sticks?). Unaging, ever
   young, he stands tall.
   He sets his feet down upon the back of the broad (earth); his ruddy
   (flames) lick the udder.
3. Converging upon the same calf, the two well-grounded milk-cows
   wander apart on their separate ways,
   measuring their roads whose end can never be reached, taking upon
   themselves all the intentions of the great one.
4. Clever poets guide his step, guarding with their heart, in different ways,
   the one exempt from age.
   Seeking to win him, they have surveyed the river. He has become
   manifest to them as the sun toward men.
5. Desirable to be seen, a thoroughbred around the racecourse; greatly to be
   invoked for the small one to live,
   since in many places he has become the birth-giver to these embryos—
   he, the generous one for all to see.

I.147 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a departure from Dīrghatamas's focus in previous Agni hymns on the creation and spread of the ritual fire. Though it begins in a ritual situation (vs. 1) and the poet commends his ritual speech to Agni in the first half of verse 2, the poet then becomes preoccupied with potential hostilities directed against him by malevolent and dishonest men and how to foil them. He counts upon the protectors deployed by Agni (vs. 3), who may well be the flames referred to in verse 1, and more generally assumes that well-performed worship of Agni will enlist that god in his protection. Who the hostile mortals are is not made clear, though in a Ṛgvedic ritual context rival sacrificers are the most likely culprits.

The insistence on the cheating and duplicity of these rivals and the general embattled but combative tone of these verses remind us somewhat of similarly contentious passages in the Old Avestan Gāthās attributed to Zarathustra.

It is also worth noting that this is the first time in the Dīrghatamas cycle that he refers to himself by name, that is, by his metronymic Māmateya (vs. 3).

1. How do the blazing (flames?) of you, of Āyu, panting hard, perform ritual service with prizes of victory, o Agni,
   when, establishing both progeny and posterity, the gods delight in the melody of truth?
2. Take heed of this most munificent speech of mine that has been brought forward, o youngest one of independent will.
   One man reviles but another sings welcome: as an extoller, I extol your body [/myself], o Agni.
3. Agni, your protectors who, watching, guarded blind Māmateya [=Dīrghatamas] from distress,
   those of good (ritual) action has the possessor [/knower] of everything [=Agni] guarded. Though wishing to damage, the cheats did no damage at all.
4. O Agni, the ungenerous one wishing us ill and full of hostility who harms us by his duplicity,
   let this heavy spell be back at him: he should bring harm upon his own body by his evil words.
5. Or, o strong one, the mortal who with premeditation harms a mortal by his duplicity,
   from him protect your praiser, o you who are praised. Agni, no one should give us over to distress.

I.148 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn shares some of the concern about malicious enemies with the previous hymn (I.147); see especially verses 2a and 5. However, the situation is more fluid and the identity of both friends and enemies is unclear, since the subjects of some crucial actions are not specified and a liberal use of injunctive verb forms blurs the temporal reference.

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with an apparent reminiscence of the original mythic theft of fire and its first installation on the ritual ground. The performers of this installation (1c) are not identified, but seem likely to be the gods. Verse 2 presents two inimical but unnamed groups: those who cannot damage Agni but presumably want to (2a) and those who delight in all his actions (2cd). The latter must be the

performers of the ritual, probably both the current mortal ones and the gods who initiated the sacrifice in verse 1, but the enemies in 2a are defined only by their contrast with the others. Verse 3 appears to reprise the action of verse 1, but in present time as the regular (re-)installation of the ritual fire for the regular, repeated rites performed by men—given the "leading forward" of 3c, perhaps the removal of the Āhavanīya fire from the Gārhapatya fire and its deposit in the east of the ritual ground.

Verse 4 is a thematic intrusion, with a standard description of a wildfire in nature. Verse 5 returns to the topic of 2a: Agni's invulnerability even when only nascent. A notable feature of verse 5 is the mention of the inability of the blind enemies of Agni to afflict him with the evil eye, given that Dīrghatamas identified himself as blind in the immediately preceding hymn (I.147.3).

1. Since with effort Mātariśvan stole him, the Hotar bringing all goods,
   belonging to all the gods,
   whom they installed for wonder among the clans of the sons of Manu,
   dazzling like the sun, far-radiant,
2. Just him, who gives (inspired) thoughts, they cannot damage. Agni is my
   armor: he delights in this.
   They take pleasure in all the acts of him, the bard who produces the
   invitatory praise.
3. Whom even now those worthy of the sacrifice have grasped in his very
   own seat and installed with lauds,
   him they lead forth, grasping him in their quest, hastening like
   chariot-horses.
4. The wondrous one dissolves many things with his fangs. After that,
   far-radiant, he shines in the wood;
   after that the wind fans his flame, like an arrow, the shot of a shooter,
   through the days.
5. Whom neither cheats nor hurtful men hurt with their hurt, though he is
   in the womb,
   him can the blind, unable to see, not damage by casting an eye on him.
   His very own ones who please him have guarded him.

I.149 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: virāj

The name Agni is not mentioned in this short and enigmatic hymn. Especially in the first verse and a half its application to Agni is quite uncertain; Geldner suggests that Soma is referred to there. In our view the poet is certainly keeping the referent open at the beginning of the hymn, but moves closer and closer to a clear identification

of Agni as the hymn proceeds. This gradual disclosure of the subject of the hymn replicates the way that the fire is slowly and carefully kindled and then emerges from its hiding place, flaming up, when it catches. The kindling is cryptically depicted in verse 2, while the burst of light and energy takes over verse 3. In the final two verses (4–5) he is identified as Hotar, a standard role for Agni, and he is revealed as fully grown, powerful, and a partner in the sacrifice with the mortal worshiper. Thus the hymn reflects Dīrghatamas's usual preoccupation with the birth of Agni, though it is treated somewhat differently here.

1. The lord of the house hastens toward great riches—the forceful one here
   in the footprint of the forceful good thing.
   The stones just honor him as he soars near.
2. He who is the bull of the two world-halves as of men by his renown,
   whose surge is swelled [/drunk] by living beings,
   who, though running forward, would still remain fixed in his womb,
3. Who has illuminated the low-lying flatland like a stronghold—a steed, a
   poet, like a charger bursting forth,
   shining like the sun, possessing a hundred selves [=flames?].
4. Possessing two births he has surmounted the three luminous realms,
   blazing through all the airy spaces—
   the best sacrificing Hotar in the seat of the waters.
5. Here he is, the Hotar possessing two births, who with desire for fame has
   granted all desirable things (to him),
   the easily spurred mortal who performs ritual service for him.

I.150 Agni

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
3 verses: uṣṇih

A curious pendant to Dīrghatamas's Agni cycle, with many puzzles despite its brevity. The poet seems to begin by declaring his allegiance and service to Agni and making his claim for guest-friendship (hence the "stranger" in vs. 1) and protection on that basis. In verse 2 he rejects the patronage of a non-sacrificer, despite his riches, while in verse 3 he returns to the benefits that accrue to the devotee of Agni.

1. Performing much ritual service for you, I call myself a stranger (under
   the protection) of *you*, o Agni,
   as if under the protection of the great goad [=sun].
2. (I go) away (from the protection) of the rich man who lacks force, who
   gives nothing even when oblations are made,
   who, not seeking the gods, is never forthcoming.

3. O inspired one, (I) a mortal (call myself) the luminous one, great, the
   proudest in heaven.
   Zealous for you, o Agni, might we become more and more preeminent.

I.151 Mitra and Varuṇa

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
9 verses: jagatī

The second part of this hymn (vss. 6cd through 9) is fairly straightforward, depicting Mitra and Varuṇa as the focus of the sacrifice and the patrons of the sacrificer. The first part is a different story—enigmatic in reference and convoluted in expression. However, it appears to concern the same topic: Mitra and Varuṇa's presence at and participation in the sacrifice. We can therefore think of the hymn as an example of large-scale "poetic repair," with the second part rephrasing the first in less contorted expressions. (On poetic repair see Jamison 2006.)

The hymn begins with the birth of Agni, presented both as ritual fire and as formidable god. The first half of verse 1 places the birth at the sacrifice itself, "amid the cows and the waters," in our opinion referring to the two auxiliary substances necessary for soma preparation, the milk for mixing and the water for rinsing and diluting. But in the second half of the verse the birth causes cosmic consternation, with the two worlds set atremble by his size and his "song," presumably a reference to the crackling of a blazing fire.

Mitra and Varuṇa make their appearance in verse 2, as sacrificial partners of a named soma-offerer; they are brought to the ritual ground and urged to aid the ritual participants. But the theme of birth returns in verse 3. Contrary to most interpretations, we consider the birth in question to be Agni's birth, treated already in verse 1, not the birth of Mitra and Varuṇa. (The dual pronoun *vām* in 3a is in Wackernagel's Position, and we construe it later in the verse, as often.) As in verse 1, humans assist at the birth of the ritual fire, a birth that has cosmic resonances. Mitra and Varuṇa also assist, bringing their skill to bear for the sacrifice (here referred to as "truth" [*ṛtá*]) and the fire. Their contributions to the sacrifice are also treated in verse 4; the skill mentioned in verse 3 they bring from heaven (4c), while they also make ready the soma-preparing waters mentioned in verse 1 (4d). Soma preparation is also the subject of the next verse (5). The cows (that is, their milk) are depicted turbulently milling around the ritual ground, bellowing at the three times of day associated with soma-pressing—dawn, midday, and sunset. (It should be noted that vs. 5 is the most puzzling verse in the hymn, and our interpretation does not entirely match those of others scholars.) In the first half of verse 6 we return to the ritual fire, kindled in verse 1—or rather to its flames, conceived of as "long-haired females." (The poet, Dīrghatamas, uses the same image and the same word in I.140.8, where the reference to flames is clearer.)

As mentioned above, the highly wrought and cryptic treatment of the sacrifice and Mitra and Varuṇa's place in it is succeeded, starting with the second half of verse 6, by a fairly uncomplex restatement of the major themes.

1. Whom [=Agni] like an ally [/Mitra] those very attentive ones, seeking cattle, begot with energy at the ceremony amid the cows and the waters—
   the two world-halves trembled by reason of his dimensions and his song, in confronting him, the dear help of (all) the races, worthy of the sacrifice.
2. Just now when the associates of Purumīḍha the soma-offerer, like allies [/Mitras], have brought you two forward,
   now find the will and the way for the one who chants, and listen to the possessor of the dwelling place, you two bulls.
3. The settlements attended upon (his) birth, which was worthy to be proclaimed in the two world-halves, for the sake of your great skill, o bulls.
   When you bring it [=skill] for truth, when for the steed [=Agni?], with the oblation you energetically pursue the rite.
4. It is the settlement greatly dear (to you) that (gets) ahead, o lord(s)—o truthful ones, you two loudly sound your lofty truth—
   You (hitch up) your skill from lofty heaven (to be) ready at hand; you hitch up the waters like an ox to a yoke-pole.
5. (Like) the two great (world-halves) in their greatness you two propel the desirable reward here. The milk-cows, pushing and shoving (though) not raising dust, are at the (ritual) seat.
   They cry out to the sun at its zenith (and) up to its setting (and) through the dawns, like a bird (screeching) in swooping pursuit.
6. The long-haired females [=flames] have bellowed to you for truth, where [=ritual seat] you are chanting the way, o Mitra, o Varuṇa.
   Send (them) surging down by yourselves; swell our insights: you two have control over the thoughts of the inspired poet.
7. (The man) who as he labors piously serves you with sacrifices, the poet and Hotar who performs the sacrifice, bringing his thoughts to success—
   it's him that you come near; you pursue his rite. Seeking us, come here to our songs and our good thinking.
8. They anoint you first with sacrifices and with cows. O truthful ones, as if at the yoking of mind
   they bring you songs along with uninterrupted thought. With undistracted mind you have attained rich (vigor).
9. You have acquired rich vigor; you have attained it—rich, great, and enduring—with your magic arts.

Through the days neither the heavens nor the rivers have attained your
divinity, nor the Paṇis your bounty.

I.152 Mitra and Varuṇa

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The nub of this hymn may be found in verse 5c, "(Though it cannot be) comprehended, the youths enjoy the formulation," and the poet almost seems to be recommending this course of action to us, the audience: to enjoy poetic formulations whether we understand them or not. The hymn provides a number of examples on which to test this advice.

The power of formulated truth and the frequent opacity of its verbal form are both treated early in the hymn. In the first verses the poet affirms the close association of Mitra and Varuṇa with truth and their power to defeat untruth (see 1cd, also indirectly 3d), while in both 2a and 3b he questions the ability of ordinary people to comprehend. The object of the comprehension is left undefined ("this," 2a; "that," 3b), but in our opinion it is the formulation, or the "truth," or the speech of the gods and/or poets. He then implies that whether or not we comprehend is immaterial, for mantras proclaimed by poets come true (2b) regardless of whether or not they were understood by their hearers.

Verse 3 seems to contain a few test formulations (3a, 3c) and comments on them (3b, 3d). The formulations are constructed as paradoxes: the footless one who is first of the footed (3a); the embryo who carries its own burden, contravening the usual expectation that the embryo is the burden that the mother bears (see, e.g., III.46.5, VI.67.4, X.27.16). The next three verses (4–6) concern the familiar mysteries of the ritual day: the rising of the sun following the dawns (vss. 4–5) and the flaring up of the fire fueled by streams of melted butter (vs. 6). These predictable daily occurrences are implicitly identified as conforming to "the ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa" (vss. 4d, 5d).

The final verse is a simple invitation to the sacrifice with prayers for the gods' aid.

1. You two wear garments of fat; your counsels are unbroken torrents.
   You have brought low all untruths; you keep company with truth.
2. Many a one will not comprehend this (formulation?) of theirs, (but) the
   virile mantra, proclaimed by poets, comes true.
   The mighty four-edged (weapon) smites one with three edges; the
   scorners of the gods were the first to waste away.
3. "Footless she [=Dawn] goes as the first of the footed." Who
   comprehends that (formulation?) of yours, o Mitra and Varuṇa?

"The unborn child bears his burden even here." He guides the truth across; he has brought down untruth.

4. We look him over, the lover of maidens [=Sun], only when he is going forth but not when he is settling down near (them)—
   (the Sun) wearing (garments) not removed (from the loom), (still) stretched out (on it)—following the dear ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa.
5. Born without a horse, a steed without a rein, ever whinnying he [=Sun] flies with arched back.
   (Though it cannot be) comprehended, the youths [=Maruts? Aṅgirases? gods?] enjoy the formulation, as in (the presence of) Mitra and Varuṇa they hymn their ordinance.
6. Aiding the son of Mamatā [=Dīrghatamas], the milk-cows will swell the one who gives pleasure with formulations [=Agni?] in the same udder.
   Knowing the ritual patterns he should seek a share of the food. Seeking to win her with his mouth, he should make broad space for Aditi [/Boundlessness].
7. Might I turn you two here, Mitra and Varuṇa, to the enjoyment of our oblation by my reverence, o gods, and with your help.
   Ours is the formulation that should prevail in battles; ours is the heavenly rain that provides deliverance.

I.153 Mitra and Varuṇa

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
4 verses: triṣṭubh

This little collection of Dīrghatamas's Mitra-Varuṇa hymns (I.151–153), which have especially concerned their presence at and participation in the sacrifice, ends with this short piece announcing the present sacrifice offered to the two gods. It focuses on the ritual details and on the priestly personnel.

1. Of one accord we shall sacrifice greatly to you two, o Mitra and Varuṇa, with oblations, with reverence,
   and with ghee, you ghee-backed ones, as when the Adhvaryus among us bring (soma) to you along with their insights.
2. A well-turned preliminary praise song, like the yoking up (of mind), has been offered to you two, (following) your ordinance, o Mitra and Varuṇa;
   when the Hotar anoints you at the ritual distributions, the patron is striving to attain your favor, o bulls.
3. Aditi, the milk-cow, swells for truth and for the person who gives offerings, o Mitra and Varuṇa,
   when serving you at the ceremony, he spurs you two on. The one upon whom the oblation is bestowed [=Agni] is like the human Hotar.

4. When the clans are to be exhilarated, the cows and the goddess Waters swell the (soma) stalk for you,
   and the lord of this house of ours is foremost. Pursue (the rite); drink of the milk of the ruddy cow.

I.154 Viṣṇu

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

One of the only hymns dedicated entirely to Viṣṇu, this composition reads almost like a round, with phraseology that is constantly repeated and recombined. The focus of the hymn is narrow: the three strides made by Viṣṇu, which measured out the cosmic spaces, earth, midspace, and heaven, and provided room for the creatures to live. These strides are also conceived of as footsteps, which contain the good things sought by the poet, and which he aspires to reach (vss. 5–6). This goal provides a forward thrust to the poem, despite the uniformity of the vocabulary throughout. Viṣṇu's footsteps are also credited with somewhat surprising actions: in verse 4 they "find elation by their own power" and in verse 6 the highest step "shines down amply."

1. Now shall I proclaim the heroic deeds of Viṣṇu, who measured out the earthly realms,
   who propped up the higher seat, having stridden out three times, the wide-ranging one.
2. In this way Viṣṇu will be praised for his heroic deed—(he who is) like a fearsome wild beast, living in the mountains and roaming wherever it wants,
   in whose three wide strides dwell all living beings.
3. Let my fortifying thought go forth to Viṣṇu, the mountain-dwelling, wide-ranging bull,
   who alone with just three steps measured out this dwelling place here, long and extended,
4. Whose three steps, filled with honey, never becoming depleted, find elation through their own power,
   who alone supports heaven and earth in their three parts and all living beings.
5. Might I reach that dear cattle-pen of his, where men seeking the gods find elation,
   for exactly that is the bond to the wide-striding one: the wellspring of honey in the highest step of Viṣṇu.
6. We wish to go to the dwelling places belonging to you two [=Viṣṇu and Indra], where there are ample-horned, unbridled cows.
   There that highest step of the wide-ranging bull shines down amply.

I.155 Viṣṇu and Indra (1–3), Viṣṇu (4–6)

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
6 verses: jagatī

This hymn starts by praising Indra and Viṣṇu jointly (vss. 1–2), but by verse 3 (pace the Anukramaṇī) it is entirely Viṣṇu's. The beginning seems to offer alternative scenarios for the creation of the wide space that is ordinarily attributed to Viṣṇu's three strides. In verse 1 the two gods standing on the back of the mountains seem to enlarge the space, and in verse 2 their clash (presumably with unnamed enemies) creates breathing room, while they also deflect the arrow of the archer Kr̥śānu, whose presence here is not explained. (Kr̥śānu is best known as the archer who shoots at the falcon that steals the soma from heaven; cf. IV.27.3, IX.77.2.)

The first half of verse 3 showcases two contrastive pairs: unspecified females (possibly hymns?) who strengthen his masculine nature, and (by implication) a son who induces his two mothers (Heaven and Earth?) to enjoy the semen. The paradoxical quality of these actions is clear, but the exact contents are not. The second half of the verse introduces the "three" so characteristic of Viṣṇu, though used of names, not strides; nonetheless, the same expansion of space, into highest heaven, seems to be at issue. Verse 4 seems almost like a "repair" of verse 3: it is clear in 4a who is tending to "his great masculine nature" (unlike 3a), and in the second half we have the familiar three strides, not three names. Verse 5 continues the theme of the three strides, while a different numerological topic, the year, closes the hymn (vs. 6).

The paired verses 3 and 4, with their mysteries and paradoxes, appear to constitute an omphalos.

1. Announce in chant the drink from the stalk to the great champion who
   exercises insight [=Indra] and to Viṣṇu,
   the two undeceivable ones who stand on the back of the mountains
   mightily like (riders) on a steed heading straight to the goal.
2. The turbulent clashing of you two vehement ones is right to the point: it
   makes wide space for you two soma-drinkers, o Indra and Viṣṇu,
   who cause (the arrow) to go wide just as it is being aimed at the mortal,
   the shot of the shooter Kr̥śānu.
3. These (females) strengthen that great masculine nature of his; he leads
   his two mothers down to enjoy the semen.
   The son sets in place the lower and the higher names of the father and
   the third name in the luminous realm of heaven.
4. It is just this very masculine nature of his that we sing—of him, the
   forceful rescuer who gives rewards and keeps the wolf away,
   who strode widely across the earthly (regions) with just three paces, for
   the wide-ranging to live.

5. On catching sight of just two strides of him of sunlike appearance, a mortal bestirs himself.
   His third no one will dare, not even the winged birds in their flight.
6. With the four times ninety names [=days], he has caused the paired (horses) [=days and nights] to quiver like a wheel set rolling.
   Having a lofty body, measuring out (the realms?) with verses, the youth who is no boy returns to the challenge.

I.156 Viṣṇu

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: jagatī

The primary deed of Viṣṇu, his claim to fame—the three strides—is not mentioned directly in this hymn. Instead, he is presented as a protean divinity, likened to or identified with a number of other gods, especially Agni. This superimposition begins with the first pāda of verse 1, where he is compared to Mitra, and in verse 2b the association with the Wives of the Gods immediately brings Tvaṣṭar to mind. In verse 4d he is identified either with Indra/Br̥haspati or with an Aṅgiras in the allusion to the Vala myth, and earlier in that verse (pāda b) "the ritual expert associated with the Maruts" may be a reference to Indra, who may be called "ritual expert of the Maruts" (*vedho marútām*) in I.169.1. But the primary association appears to be with Agni. The title "ritual expert," though used of other gods (like Indra, see above), is especially characteristic of Agni, and the references to Viṣṇu as embryo and to his birth (vss. 2–3) are typical Agni themes (compare 3b especially with VI.48.5, of the birth of Agni). The "three seats" in verse 5 also recalls Agni with his three hearths, and this word may in fact signal the point of contact between Viṣṇu and Agni, since "three" is the number that defines Viṣṇu's great deed, and the "three seats" could be the three footprints left by his strides. (See the footprints as places in I.154.4–6.)

The theme of Viṣṇu's multiple identities is announced, in typically oblique fashion, in the middle verse of this hymn: "recognizing him, announce his very names" (3c).

1. Become kindly like an ally [/Mitra]—you with ghee as your drink, traveling your ways, extensive and having far-reaching brilliance.
   Then for you, o Viṣṇu, praise can be brought to success only by one who knows, and sacrifice can be made to succeed by one who offers an oblation.
2. Whoever will do service to the ancient ritual expert and to the newer one, to Viṣṇu together with the Wives (of the Gods),
   who will speak of his birth, the great birth of the great one, just he will surpass in renown even his yokefellow.

3. You praisers, carry him to term in the way that is known—the ancient one who is by birth the embryo of truth.
   Recognizing him, announce his very names. Let us share in the favor of you who are great, o Viṣṇu.
4. That resolve of his does king Varuṇa follows, that do the Aśvins, the resolve of the ritual expert associated with the Maruts.
   Viṣṇu upholds the highest skill that knows the days, when with his comrade(s) he opens up the pen.
5. The divine one, Viṣṇu, who sought for Indra to accompany him, sought for the one of good action as the one who acts (even) better,
   the ritual expert, possessing the three seats, he enlivened the Ārya. He apportioned to the sacrificer a portion of truth.

I.157 Aśvins

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
6 verses: jagatī 1–4, triṣṭubh 5–6.

As is usual for the Aśvins, this hymn is a morning hymn (vs. 1) recited at the beginning of the sacrificial day. Less typical but elsewhere attested (e.g., VIII.5) is its implicit representation of the Aśvins as bringers of rain. This theme is most obvious in verse 2, for in 2b *ukṣatam*, translated "increase," is a śleṣa, to be read also as "sprinkle." The "ghee and honey" by which the Aśvins bring increase to the dominion are the rain they sprinkle on it. If "honey" refers to rain in verse 2, then so also do their "honey-bearing chariot" (vs. 3) and their "honeyed whip" (vs. 4). At least here the latter probably refers to lightning (Pirart 1995: 296, with reference to Blair 1961: 152–54). The rain they bring is fertilizing for all beings, both animals and plants (vs. 5). Likewise, the description of the Aśvins' sending fire and water into the trees (vs. 6) refers to the water, which not only allows the trees to grow but also carries fire that emerges when wood is kindled.

The theme of the Aśvins as bringers of rain is interwoven with that of their chariot as a reflection of the sacrifice. The sets of three often associated with them and their chariot refer to the three soma-pressings (cf. also I.34). Here, significantly, in verse 3 their chariot has three wheels and three chariot boxes. And finally, the Aśvins are not only bringers of rain, but they are also bringers of healing (4cd, 6). These two functions are connected because they both give and extend life.

One last note: in verse 6 *ráthyebhiḥ* "through the parts of your chariot" is a hapax and there are several other plausible interpretations of it: among them the chariot-horses (Sāyaṇa), chariot-skills (Geldner), and reins (Pirart). Since the hymn mentions the chariot itself and its boxes, wheels, whip, and horses, we suggest that the word encompasses all those things that constitute the chariot—and therefore the rain and the sacrifice—and that complement the healing remedies they bring.

1. Agni has awakened; the Sun rises from the earth; great, glowing Dawn has dawned widely with her ray of light.
   The Aśvins have harnessed their chariot to make their journey. The god Savitar has spurred the living world in all directions.
2. When you harness the bull that is your chariot, Aśvins, then increase [/sprinkle] our dominion with ghee and honey!
   Enliven our sacred formulation in the contests! We would share the riches in the heroes' victory.
3. Let the three-wheeled, honey-bearing chariot of the Aśvins with its swift horses, which is well-praised, journey near.
   With its three chariot boxes, the generous (chariot), bringing all good shares, will carry good fortune here to both the two-footed and four-footed.
4. Carry nourishment to us, Aśvins, and mix us with your honeyed whip.
   Extend our lifetime, wipe away our diseases, repel hatred, and be companions to us.
5. You place the embryo in the females of moving beings; you place it within all living things.
   You, o bulls, have sent fire and water here into the trees, Aśvins.
6. You are healers through your healing remedies, and you are also charioteers through the parts of your chariot.
   And again, o powerful ones, you set dominion upon him who ritually serves with his oblation and by his thought.

I.158 Aśvins

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1–5, anuṣṭubh 6

This is an elusive hymn, but a particularly interesting one since it appears to be autobiographical—although whether it refers to the actual life of the poet or to the life of the poet as his own literary creation is not entirely clear. The best starting point may be the final verse, in which the poet describes himself as old, but nevertheless as the "chariot-driver" of the waters and a "formulator (of the truth)." He is still a poet and a powerful one at that. The problem the hymn addresses, therefore, could be an attempt by the poet's patrons or fellow poets to retire him, and therefore he calls upon the Aśvins to help him show his mettle as a poet. One of the wondrous acts of the Aśvins is to rejuvenate, and therefore it is not surprising that he would turn to them.

Even if this is the right approach to the hymn, a fair number of difficulties remain. In verse 2 the poet asks who will serve the Aśvins, if not he, so that the two gods will take their place "in the track of the cow." As often elsewhere, the cow is the inspired hymn, and therefore the "track of the cow" should be the place of the sacrifice, where the inspired hymn is recited. In praising the Aśvins

the poet alludes to the two gods' great deeds of rescue, which turn on the theme of water. In verse 3 the poet mentions the story of Bhujyu, who was rescued from the water by the Aśvins. In verse 5 is the story of a man whom Dāsas bound and tossed into the rivers. The story is unknown, but presumably that person was also rescued from the waters. These rescues anticipate the poet's final claim in verse 6 to be the master of the waters. The significance of this is not clear, but it may mean that he can bring the rain through the power of his recitations and rituals. These stories of drowning, of too much water, also contrast to the poet's plea in verse 4 not to be dried out by time and not to be burnt up, as if he were like kindling. Despite his age the poet is and wishes to remain vital, not to become a dried-out old stick of a man.

The Bṛhaddevatā (IV.21–25) presents the story or stories mentioned in verse 5 as the story of Dīrghatamas himself. According to it, his slaves (dāsas) tied up the old, blind Dīrghatamas and immersed him in the waters of the river. One of them, called Traitana, tried to strike him with sword, but ended up cutting to pieces his own head, shoulders, and chest. Eventually Dīrghatamas washed up near the country of the Aṅgas, where he was rescued. Later he had a son, Kakṣīvant, by a servant of the king. It is unlikely that this is the story known to the Ṛgveda or even that verse 5 tells the story of Dīrghatamas, unless metaphorically. Still, the reference to the Dāsas seems to be of particular significance. The earlier part of the hymn develops a repetitive phonological pattern with *daśasyátam* (1b), *dásrā* (1c), *dā́śat* (2a), and *dáśatayaḥ* (4c). These words, most of which have a marked position in the pāda, seem to lead toward the story of the Dāsas. These Dāsas did try to destroy someone but ended up destroying themselves, and perhaps this is the message that the poet wishes to impress upon those who are trying to push him aside.

1. You two Vasus, Rudras, who give many counsels, strengthening (our praise) in preeminence—favor us, o bulls,
   since the son of Ucathya [=Dīrghatamas] is the legacy (left) for you, wondrous ones, since you two have run forth (to him) with unstinting help.
2. Who will serve you two for this very favor, when, Vasus, by his homage you two will take your place in the track of the cow?
   Awaken for us plentiful gifts filled with riches, acting as if with a thought to fulfill our wishes.
3. Because your harnessed (chariot)—swelling, rugged—was set apart in the middle of the flood for the son of Tugra [=Bhujyu],
   I would come to your sheltering help by flying ways, as a hero (flies) his course.
4. The praise song should give wide space to (me), the son of Ucathya. Let these two winged females [=Night and Dawn] not milk me dry.
   Let the piled-up, ten-stick kindling not burn me, when he [=Agni], whom you bound by the trunk of his body, chews at the earth.

5. "The rivers, best of mothers, will not swallow me!" (he cried,) when the
   Dāsas sank him, tightly bound.
   When Traitana hewed away the head, the Dāsa himself ate his own chest
   and shoulders.
6. Dīrghatamas, the son of Mamatā, though having grown old in the tenth
   stage (of life),
   becomes the chariot-driver of the waters that are moving toward their
   goal and the formulator (of the truth).

I.159 Heaven and Earth

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: jagatī

The various, and sometimes paradoxical, relationships between (masculine) Heaven and (feminine) Earth, and their joint relationship with their sons, the gods, are the topic of this hymn. The two are named in the first and last (5) verses of the hymn, while in between they are only referred to by kinship terms. In the first half of verse 2 their parental roles are kept separate: father and mother, but in the second half they are subsumed in a pregnant dual, "two fathers." The tables are turned in verse 3, where they appear as "two mothers." Although both of these duals are frequently used in the R̥gveda for the paired parents of both genders (and such is their reference here), the alternation in this hymn seems meaningful and contextually appropriate. Minds are not associated with either gender exclusively, so that "the mind of the... father and of the mother" in verse 2ab belongs to each individually, whereas in 2c it is, properly, two fathers who "possess good semen." The reason for the feminine "two mothers" in verse 3 is less clear, though as objects acted upon they may evoke the feminine. After these various parental designations, the poet branches out in verse 4b, identifying the two as both siblings and a married couple, with a subtle but unmistakable suggestion of incest.

In the meantime, the beloved paradox of children giving birth to their parents is given full play in verses 3 and 4.

As discussed in the introduction to I.160, this hymn is a virtual twin to the one that follows.

1. I shall start up the praise, along with sacrifices, to Heaven and to Earth,
   the two great ones growing strong through truth, the discerning ones,
   at the rites of distribution,
   those of wondrous power, whose sons are gods, who together with the
   gods tender things of value (to the mortal) who has an insight right to
   the point.

2. And I turn my mind to the great and self-powerful mind of the undeceivable father and of the mother, with my invocations.
   The two fathers possessing good semen have made the land wide for offspring and immortal in its expanses.
3. These their sons, good artisans with wondrous powers, begot the two great ones, two mothers, to be first in their thought.
   You two protect what is real in upholding the standing and the moving; you protect the footprint of your son who is unduplicitous [=Agni?].
4. Masters of magical power, having good forethought, they measured [=created] the kindred pair who share the same womb, the married couple who share the same dwelling place.
   They stretch an ever newer thread to heaven and within the sea—the very brilliant poets.
5. The desirable largesse of Savitar shall we think upon today at the impulse of the god.
   For us, o Heaven and Earth, through your kind attention establish wealth consisting of goods and a hundred cows.

I.160 Heaven and Earth

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
5 verses: jagatī

Like I.159 this hymn is dedicated to Heaven and Earth and consists of five verses in jagatī meter, but the similarities are stronger than those bare facts suggest: I.160 is structurally identical to 159, and they share phraseological and thematic patterns. Like 159, 160 names Heaven and Earth only in its first and last verses, with the references in between conveyed by kinship terms and adjectival duals, patterning in much the same way as in 159—first separate designations for father and mother (159.2ab, 160.2b), then duals identifying the pair with one gender or another ("two fathers" 159.2c, "two mothers" 159.3b versus "two world-halves/rodasī" [fem., depicted as girls] 160.2c, "two fathers" 160.3a).

One of the notable features of 159 is the relationship between Heaven and Earth and their sons, the gods. The same parental relationship is depicted in 160, but with a single son, the Sun. As in 159, this son is first introduced in verse 1, but also as in 159 the theme is developed primarily in verses 3–4, where the same paradox of the child begetting his parents is employed (esp. in 160.4, but note the child milking out his own milk from his parents in vs. 3). Similar or identical words are used: the son in 160.4a is "the best artisan of the artisans (*apás*) of the gods," while the sons in 159.3a are "good artisans" (*svápas*); the two fathers of 159.2c "possess good semen" (*surétas*), just as the bull representing Heaven does in 160.3c. Two verbs are used to express the sons'/son's begetting of the parents: the literal √*jan* "beget" (*jajñuḥ*

159.3b, *jajñā́na* 160.4b) and the metaphorical √*mā* "measure out" (*mamire* 159.4a, *ví... mamé* 160.4c); both the sons of 159 and the son of 160 possess magical power (*māyínaḥ* 159.4a, *māyáyā* 160.3b).

Once seen, the pervasive underlying identity of these two hymns cannot be denied, but it is an index of the art of Dīrghatamas that the poems strike the audience as completely distinct and that, as far as we are aware, their patterned similarity has not previously been recognized—unlike other such pairs, like the Vālakhilya hymns VIII.49–50, 51–52, or IV.13–14, IX.104–105, as discussed by Bloomfield (1916: 13–14).

1. Because these two, Heaven and Earth, beneficial to all, truthful, are those who uphold the poet of the airy realm,
   he speeds between the two Holy Places of good birth—the god, the blazing Sun, between the two goddesses, according to his ordinance.
2. The two great ones of broad expanse, inexhaustible, the father and mother, protect living beings—
   the two world-halves, the very boldest ones, who are like (girls) inviting admiration, when their father has decked them out with their forms.
3. That draft-horse, the son of the two fathers, the insightful one provided with the means of purification purifies living beings by his magical power.
   Out of the dappled cow and the bull possessing good semen he has milked his blazing milk all the days.
4. This one here, the best artisan of the artisans of the gods, who begat the two world-halves beneficial to all,
   who measured out the two airy realms with a display of his good resolve, with unaging props—he has been universally praised.
5. While being sung, o great ones, you will establish great fame for us and lofty dominion, o Heaven and Earth,
   by which we will extend (our control) over the communities all the days. Jointly impel to us power worthy of wonder.

I.161 Ṛbhus

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
14 verses: jagatī 1–13, triṣṭubh 14

This is a difficult hymn, but one essential for understanding the Ṛbhus and their relation to the Third Pressing. Its narrative tells how the Ṛbhus attained immortality and entered among the gods—or seems to. This theme is stated in verse 2 and elaborated in verses 11–14. The Ṛbhus were priests who attained status as gods by their sacrificial performance. As gods they are worshiped in the Third Pressing, and therefore it is not surprising that the ritual acts by which they became gods are those

of the Third Pressing. For a detailed discussion of these acts, see the discussion by Brereton (2012).

The hymn begins by reference to one of the great acts of the R̥bhus, their transformation of a single soma cup into four soma cups. This act signifies their divinization because the four cups represent four soma offerings to Indra and the three R̥bhus. A single cup would have restricted the soma offering only to Indra. The hymn opens with the R̥bhus' address to Agni, who has been sent by the gods. This dialogue takes place in the middle of the action, for apparently Agni has pointed to the *camasá*, the ritual soma cup, and the R̥bhus are concerned that Agni thinks that they have insulted this soma cup in some way (vs. 1). But Agni reaffirms the command of the gods that the R̥bhus create four cups out of this one, and he offers to make them gods (vs. 2). However, the R̥bhus reply that they have much more to do as priests before they themselves become the objects of worship. First, they need to make a horse. Elsewhere they fashion the two horses of Indra, and it is to this act that verse 3 likely refers. The making of these horses points toward the Hāriyojanagraha, an offering to Indra as he harnesses his horses to leave the ritual ground at the end of the Third Pressing (see also I.61–63, 82). Second, they need to make a chariot, which can represent the hymn or the whole ritual. Third, they need to make a milk-cow, which represents the already-pressed soma stalks, which are made to yield additional soma in the Third Pressing. And finally they need to make young two who are old. The two might be the sacrificer and his wife or another pair. Once the R̥bhus have accomplished all their great sacrificial deeds, then they will be worthy to follow Agni to heaven (vs. 3). Tvaṣṭar is introduced in verse 4 probably in connection with another rite in the Third Pressing in which the Wife of the Sacrificer receives indirect access to the soma. Verse 5 returns to the four cups and we now learn that Tvaṣṭar, who had originally made the one cup, is angry that the R̥bhus are modifying his creation. The R̥bhus protect themselves by taking on "other names." These "other names" may be their priestly offices, and by these names or priestly offices the "maiden" will rescue them. The hymn gives little clue to identity of the "maiden," but she may be Sarasvatī (cf. VI.49.7) or even Speech (Vāc) herself. In either case, the words that the R̥bhus master or the knowledge that they possess somehow protects them from the anger of Tvaṣṭar. Vs. 6 affirms that the R̥bhus did succeed in becoming gods and divine recipients of soma.

In verse 7 the hymn returns to the sacrificial acts that made them immortal: the soma-pressing (see vs. 10), the rejuvenation of the aging pair, the creation of a horse, and the harnessing of the chariot that is the sacrifice or the hymn. Verse 8 marks a return to a dialogue, now between the R̥bhus and the gods. According to Sāyaṇa, the "water" and the "rinse-water of muñja-reeds" that the gods offer the R̥bhus are the soma of the first two pressings. This interpretation is contextually justifiable, but such a denigration of these first two pressings is unlikely. Oldenberg suggests that the gods first offer the R̥bhus two inferior drinks and only then and finally the soma. If we take this approach, the first offering would be water, and

the second might be a kind of faux-soma. The word *múñja* approximates *mū́javant*, the mountain from which the real soma comes, and therefore the "rinse-water of muñja-reeds" may represent an inferior approximation of soma. It is only the third time and in the third soma-pressing that the gods offer the Ṛbhus the real soma. Structurally verse 9 continues verse 8, since again three things are mentioned, of which the third is the best. However, it is difficult to say what the feminine noun described as *vadharyántī* "weapon-wielding" in pāda c might be, since the adjective is otherwise unattested. According to Sāyaṇa, it is either the earth or a line of clouds and its weapon is lightning. Along similar lines, Geldner suggests that it is the rainy season and again that its weapon is lightning. Interpreting *vadharyántī* slightly differently, Witzel and Gotō understand it as the axe (*svádhiti*) "serving as a weapon." We resolve the ellipsis by drawing its sense from the verb *pra* √*brū* "proclaim" in pāda c and the reference to spoken truths in pāda d. The first two Ṛbhus praise water and fire, which are essential to the sacrifice, but the third Ṛbhu recognizes true speech as the most essential element.

Verse 10 returns once again to the great sacrificial deeds of the Ṛbhus and this time especially to the soma that is prepared in the Third Pressing. In the Third Pressing soma stalks from the first two pressings are pressed again to yield additional soma. In verse 10 these stalks are the "lame cow"—lame because they have already been pressed—which are then soaked in water. The "carving" of the cow is the re-pressing of the stalks, and the dung is the now thoroughly mangled stems of the soma plant. The place of 10d is not clear. Whoever the "parents" may be, the "sons" are likely the Ṛbhus or the priests that they represent.

The last sequence of verses, 11–14, probably describes the ascent of the Ṛbhus to immortality, but even if this is correct, the details are obscure. At best we can point out a few possible identifications and a few possible interpretations. Agohya in verse 11 is probably the Sun as the "Unconcealable One," although he might also be Savitar. In I.110.2–3 the Ṛbhus' attainment of immortality is connected with Agohya, and if Agohya is the Sun, then perhaps one stage in the Ṛbhus' ascent is to the sun. The Sun governs the year, and therefore the "grass on the heights" may represent the summer pasturage, and "the waters in the valleys" the winter pasturage. In verse 13 the identification of the goat and the dog as the sun and moon is doubtful. It assumes that the *bastá* "goat" is *ajá ekapád*, "the one-footed goat," which elsewhere is the Sun. The identification of the moon as "the dog" follows Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI.1.5.1, in which the moon is called the heavenly dog. In the last verse, the gods move throughout the visible world seeking the Ṛbhus, but perhaps they do not find them because they have gone from the visible world.

1. [The Ṛbhus:] "Why has the best, why has the youngest one come here
   to us? For what messenger's duty does he speed? What is it that we
   have said?
   We have not insulted the cup with its great hollow. Brother Agni, we have
   spoken only of the excellence of the wooden (vessel)."

2. [Agni:] "'Make the one cup to be four'—that the gods said to you. For that I have come to you.
   Sons of Sudhanvan, if you will do thus, you will become worthy (recipients) of the sacrifice along with the gods."
3. When you replied to the messenger Agni, "A horse must be made, and a chariot also must be made here.
   A milk-cow must be made, and the two must be made young. When we have done these things, brother, we will follow you [=gods]."
4. Having done these things, Ṛbhus, you asked this: "Just where has he gone who came here to us as a messenger?"
   When he caught sight of the four cups that were made, just then Tvaṣṭar was anointed among the Wives (of the Gods).
5. When Tvaṣṭar said, "We shall smash those who have insulted the cup that gives drink to the gods"—
   they [=the Ṛbhus] make other names for themselves during the soma-pressing—by their other names the maiden will rescue them.
6. Indra has hitched up his two fallow bays, and the Aśvins their chariot. Bṛhaspati drove near (the cow) of all forms.
   You—Ṛbhu, Vibhvan, and Vāja—went to the gods. By your skillful work you came to a share in the sacrifice.
7. From the hide you made the cow to flow (milk) by your insights. You made those young who were the aging pair.
   O sons of Sudhanvan, you fashioned a horse from a horse, and having hitched up the chariot, you journeyed toward the gods.
8. [The Ṛbhus to the gods:] "You said, 'Drink this water, or drink this, the rinse-water of muñja-reeds.
   Sons of Sudhanvan, if you do not in any way find satisfaction in this, you shall find exhilaration in the Third Pressing rite.'"
9. One (Ṛbhu) said, "Waters are most important," and the other said, "Fire is most important."
   (The third) one proclaimed the weapon-wielding (speech?) from among the many. Speaking truths, you carved the cups.
10. One drives the lame cow down to the water. One carves the flesh, carried here with a basket.
    Up till sunset one bore away the dung. Have the parents given help to their sons?
11. You made grass for him on the heights and waters in the valleys by your skillful work, o men,
    when you slept in the house of Agohya: you do not continue that here today, o Ṛbhus.
12. When, having shut your eyes, you crept around the living worlds, where were your loving parents?

You cursed him who took your arm. Who made a declaration (to you),
to him you also made a declaration.

13. After you slept, R̥bhus, you asked this: "Who awakened us here, o Agohya?"
The billy-goat [=the Sun?] said the dog [=the Moon?] was the awakener.
Here today, after a year, you opened your eyes.
14. The Maruts travel through heaven, Agni along the earth; the Wind here travels through the midspace;
Varuṇa travels through the waters and seas—seeking you, o sons of strength.

The following two hymns treat the Horse Sacrifice (Aśvamedha) and are the only absolutely clear reflections of this ritual in the R̥gveda.

I.162 Praise of a Horse (Aśvastuti)

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
22 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 3, 6

The first of the two Aśvamedha hymns focuses on the actual sacrifice, with an almost cinematic treatment of the proceedings and an unflinching look at the gory details. The hymn begins with the parading of the horse on the day of sacrifice: the year-long preliminaries in the classical Aśvamedha are not mentioned here, and it is not easy to tell how much elaboration accreted to this ritual in the post-R̥gvedic period—though it seems likely that the R̥gvedic version was a much simpler affair.

After an initial verse calling on an array of gods to bear witness to the celebration of the horse, there follow three verses (2–4) devoted to the goat that is led in front of the horse and that is itself sacrificed before the killing of the horse. The goat is the only sacrificial animal mentioned in the hymn besides the horse, in contrast to the classical version of the rite in which a multitude of wild and domestic animals are, at least theoretically, bound for sacrifice (and in general then released). In verses 5–6 a variety of priests (5) and minor ritual functionaries (6; see also the cooks in vs. 12) are mentioned—the priests being urged, somewhat shockingly, to "fill your bellies" on the sacrifice. This group of officiants seems to correspond on the human level to the gods assembled in verse 1, and all are thus implicated in the performance of the sacrifice, as are the poet himself and his fellow seers in verse 7.

The gaze then turns to the sacrifice proper (vss. 8–17) and to the equipment associated with the horse (vss. 8, 14, 16), the equipment for cooking the oblation (vs. 13), and, most dramatically, the physical evidence of the slaughter: the fly-blown flesh and the sticky blood and guts (vs. 9), the bloated belly and the smell of the butchered animal (vs. 10), the cooking juices running off the skewered beast on

the fire (vs. 11). All of the mentioned paraphernalia and the gore are meant to accompany the horse itself to the gods. This section of the hymn gains much of its power from a dual focus: the gritty reality of an actual sacrifice competes with the reverential attitude to the victim, regularly addressed in the 2nd person—such that the horse is endowed almost with personhood while at the same time being dismembered, cooked, and consumed. For this reason, in 3rd-person contexts we use the pronouns "he, him, his" for the horse, rather than "it," et cetera: the poet will not allow us to objectify or neuter-ize the animal and requires us to come to terms with what "we" are doing to "him."

The description of the dismembering becomes more detailed beginning in verse 18, where the axe approaches the horse's ribs. Although this carving up logically precedes some of the sacrificial actions treated before—especially the cooking of the already butchered horse—there is a reason for its positioning here. We are entering the third and last part of the hymn, in which the horse is sent on his journey to the gods. The emphasis in these carving verses (18–20) is on the proper order of the cutting and the patterned positioning of the pieces of the horse, so that he can make its own way on his "undamaged" legs (vss. 18, 20). The pieces of the horse are arranged to re-form the actual body of the horse, and this reconstituted *body* is complemented by the *lifebreath* (*ātman*) that is also making the journey to the gods (vs. 20). The climax is reached in verse 21, where the horse is assured that he is not dead or injured and that his journey to the gods will be made easily, in company with the mounts of the gods. The hymn ends (vs. 22) with the hope that the sacrificed horse will bring us good things, and with an unemphatic prayer for our "guiltlessness," presumably because of the potential guilt associated with the killing of the horse.

To those who know the classical śrauta version of the Aśvamedha the most striking omission in this hymn is any mention of the sexual intercourse (or simulated intercourse) of the chief wife of the king and sacrificer with the just slaughtered horse. If our interpretation of X.86, the Vr̥ṣākapi hymn, is correct—that it is a burlesqued version of an Aśvamedha with a randy monkey as victim—the missing sexual element in our hymn here was omitted out of delicacy rather than being unknown to the R̥gveda.

1. Let not Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Āyu, Indra the lord of the R̥bhus, and the Maruts disregard us
   when we shall proclaim the heroic deeds of the prizewinning, god-born racehorse at the ritual distribution.
2. When they lead the gift [=goat] held fast in front of (the horse, which is) decked out with a fresh garment and with family treasure,
   facing well forward, constantly bleating, the goat, representing all forms, passes into the fold of Indra and Pūṣan.
3. This billy-goat, belonging to all the gods, is led in front, along with the prizewinning horse, as Pūṣan's portion.
   When (they lead the goat) as the pleasing fore-offering along with the steed, it is Tvaṣṭar himself who stimulates him for (the deed) that brings good fame.

4. When the sons of Manu lead around the horse to be offered three times along (the path) that goes to the gods in proper order,
 then the goat, Pūṣan's portion, goes first, announcing the sacrifice to the gods.
5. The Hotar, the Adhvaryu, the Expiator [?], the Fire-kindler, the Handler of the Pressing-stones, and the well-inspired Reciter—
 with this sacrifice, well prepared and well offered, fill your bellies.
6. The hewers of the sacrificial post and its conveyors, those who fashion the knob for the post for the horse,
 and those who assemble the equipment for cooking the steed—let the applause also of those urge us on.
7. (When) he went forth, at that same time my thought was produced—(when) the straight-backed (horse went forth) to the regions of the gods.
 The inspired seers cheer him on. We have made him well connected to the prospering of the gods.
8. The lead-rope of the prizewinner, the harness of the steed, the halter on his head and his bridle,
 and the grass brought up into his mouth—let all this of yours be also among the gods.
9. What of the horse's flesh a fly has eaten, or what is smeared on the sacrificial post or on the axe,
 what is on the hands of the Queller-priest and what on his nails—let all this of yours be also among the gods.
10. The contents of his belly that bloats up, the odor of his raw flesh—
 let the Queller-priests make that well-done and let them cook the ritual offering until it's cooked to readiness.
11. What runs down from your leg as it's being cooked by the fire when you have been impaled on the spit—
 let that not stick to the ground nor to the grasses; let it be given to the gods, who are eager for it.
12. Those who inspect the prizewinner when cooked and who say about him: "It smells good! Take it off (the fire)!"
 and those who draw near in hopes of a share of the meat of the steed—let the applause also of those urge us on.
13. The probe for the meat-cooking cauldron, the cups for the pouring of broth,
 the covers of the bowls that keep them warm, the hooks, and the baskets are in attendance around the horse.
14. (The gear) that made him set his stride, come to a halt, and turn aside, and the foot-fetter of the steed,
 and what he drank and what fodder he ate—let all this of yours be also among the gods.

15. Let the fire that smells of smoke not besmirch you; let the blazing hot cauldron not topple over.
    The one sacrificed, sought out, and greeted when the cry "*vaṣaṭ*" is made: that horse do the gods receive.
16. The mantel they spread out for the horse, the over-mantel, and the gold (trappings) that are for him,
    the harness, and the foot-fetter—(all these), his own dear things, hold the steed fast among the gods.
17. If, in riding you, anyone goaded (you) with his heel or with a whip, along with too much "come on, come on,"
    I make all these sweet for you with a sacred formulation, as (priests) sweeten them [=oblations?] by the ladling of the oblation at the rites.
18. The axe converges on the thirty-four ribs of the prizewinning horse, who has connection with the gods.
    Arrange his legs, undamaged, into patterns, and carve them up joint by joint, having called them out in order.
19. There is one carver of Tvaṣṭar's horse and two to hold him fast: such is the proper way.
    The (sacrificial portions) I make from your legs according to the proper order, just those lumps, one after the other, do I offer in the fire.
20. Let your own dear lifebreath not burn you as you go along; let the axe not bring the parts of your body to a standstill.
    Let a greedy man who is no carver, skipping steps, not make your legs damaged with a knife gone awry.
21. Truly in this way you do not die nor are you harmed: you go to the gods by paths easy to travel.
    The two fallow bays (of Indra) and the two dappled mares (of the Maruts) have become your yokemates. The prizewinning (horse) has taken his place at the chariot-pole of the (Aśvins') donkey.
22. (Let) the prizewinner (win) for us a mass of good cattle and good horses, male children, and all-prospering wealth.
    Let Aditi make guiltlessness for us. Let the horse, accompanied by our oblations, win sovereignty for us.

I.163 Praise of a Horse (Aśvastuti)

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn, the other one devoted to the Horse Sacrifice, is very different in tone, style, and intent from its predecessor, but they clearly form a pair. In fact, this hymn can be taken as the concrete fulfillment of the announcement in the first

verse of the prior hymn (I.162.1): "...when we shall proclaim the heroic deeds of the...horse." That hymn did not itself actually accomplish this claim, for there was no real praise of the horse or what he did. But this hymn has all the trappings of a proper praise hymn. It begins with a number of verses (vss. 1–4) about the miraculous birth and mythic history of the horse and its cosmic connections and divine identifications.

In our opinion, the rest of the hymn concerns the horse's journey to heaven, the very journey presented also at the end of 162 (esp. vs. 21). But this is now no ordinary horse: he is now identified with the sun and described in exalted and enigmatic language. After a brief mention of the horse tackle in verse 5, the journey begins in verse 6. That the traveler is the sacrificed horse is strongly suggested by the language, which connects it to the horse's journey in 162: the poet mentally sees the lifebreath (*ātman*) as it flies, reminding us of the horse's lifebreath in 162.20, and this lifebreath as bird is moving on "paths easy to travel," the same phrase spoken reassuringly to the horse in 162.21. With the identification of the sacrificed horse with the sun-bird thus firmly established, the poet is free to elaborate and complicate his mental vision of the journey in the following verses (7–11), not all of which are entirely clear. The poet's vision also seems to identify the horse/sun-bird with poetic inspiration, in phraseology that is reminiscent of the "Pataṃga" hymn (X.177), where poetic inspiration takes the form of a bird.

As this lyrical passage comes toward its end, the figure of the horse reasserts itself, and the connections to 162 become stronger again. In the much-discussed verse 10, in our opinion the arrangement of the divine horses, compared to the V-shaped formation of geese in flight, refers to the divine mounts that accompany the sacrificed horse in 162.21. Verse 11 addresses the horse as it flies in the guise of the sun-bird, but we return to the real world of the sacrifice in verse 12, which in ring-compositional fashion picks up the procession of goat and horse to slaughter that began 162, reprising some of the language of that hymn as well (*úpa prā́gāt* "has gone forth" in 163.12–13 and 162.7; *puró nīyate* "is led in front" in 163.12 and 162.3). The summary verse (13) sends the horse on his way and again expresses hopes for a return on our sacrificial investment.

1. When you whinnied on first being born, rising from the sea or from the
 fertile soil,
 (having) the two wings of a falcon, the two forelegs of an antelope—
 your great birth was worthy of praise, o steed.
2. Trita yoked him, who had been given by Yama; Indra was the first to
 mount him;
 the Gandharva grasped his halter. O Vasus, you carved the horse out of
 the sun.
3. You are Yama; you are Āditya, o steed. You are Trita by reason of your
 hidden commandment.

You were separated all at once from Soma [=the moon?]. They say that you have three (kinship) bonds in heaven.

4. Three bonds they say you have in heaven, three in the waters, and three within the sea.
And you will appear to me like Varuṇa, o steed, (in the place [=sea]) where they say is your highest means of begetting.

5. Here are (the waters?) to rub you down, o prizewinner, and here places for the winner to set his hooves.
Here I saw your good halters, over which the herdsmen of the truth keep guard.

6. With my mind I recognized your lifebreath from afar, a bird flying below heaven.
I saw your winged head panting along the dustless paths easy to travel.

7. Here I saw your highest form, seeking to win refreshments in the track of the cow.
When the mortal attained the benefit from you, just after that the foremost devourer of plants [=Agni] awakened (you?).

8. The chariot (goes) after you, after you the dashing youth, o steed; after you the cows, after you the good fortune of maidens.
The troops have gone after your companionship. The gods have measured themselves against your heroic strength.

9. Having golden horns [=rays], his feet copper, swift as thought he was (an) Indra in the lower (realm).
The gods themselves came to eat the oblation of him, who first mounted the steed.

10. The heavenly chargers take their places like geese in formation—with the edges (of the formation) their legs, its middle hollow,
its nose a hero [=the lead horse], when the horses have driven their heavenly drive.

11. Your body is flying, o steed; your perception is swooping like the wind.
Your horns [=rays], dispersed in many places, keep flickering in the wilderness.

12. The prizewinning steed has gone forth to slaughter, reflecting with a mind turned to the gods.
The goat, his umbilical kin, is led in front. The poets and singers come along behind.

13. The steed has gone forth to the highest seat, to his father and mother [=Heaven and Earth].
He should go to the gods today, for he is most pleasing (to them); then he expresses his hope for desirable things for the pious man.

I.164 All Gods (Riddle Hymn)

Dīrghatamas Aucathya
52 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 12, 15, 23, 29, 36, 41; prastārapaṅkti 42; anuṣṭubh 51

The Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn to a variety of gods: All the Gods (1–41), Speech (42a, 45), the Waters (42b), Dung-smoke (43a), Soma (43b), Agni, Sūrya, Vāyu (44), Sūrya (46, 47), the Wheel of the Seasons (48), Sarasvatī (49), the Sādhyas (50), Sūrya or Parjanya or Agni (51), Sarasvant or Sūrya (52). Such diversity creates the impression that this hymn is a fairly loose assemblage, although its thematic and structural programs indicate that the hymn, or the bulk of it, constitutes a coherent composition. Among the more recent and significant studies of the hymn are those of Brown (1968) and Houben (2000), which also discuss older interpretations and upon which we have drawn extensively and gratefully.

The hymn has continued to attract scholarly attention in part because it has continued to escape satisfying interpretation. One reason is that the hymn was composed to be enigmatic, to be never fully decipherable. But even if we will never be able to solve all its puzzles, we can appreciate how it functions as an enigma and perhaps why. Since the hymn makes both implicit and explicit reference to Vedic ritual, including rites other than the soma ritual, one way into the hymn is through its connections to ritual. Even though the later ritual application of R̥gvedic hymns is not always a reliable guide to their original ritual contexts, it offers a place to start. According to Aitareya Āraṇyaka V.3.2, verses 1–41 are part of the Vaiśvadevaśastra, a recitation at the midday offerings of the Mahāvrata ceremony, and Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka II.18 places the whole of the hymn in the Mahāvrata rite. This Mahāvrata rite is a variation of the Agniṣṭoma soma ritual that was performed on the next to last day of the year-long Gavāmayana rite. It may well be that the application of the hymn in the Mahāvrata rite is secondary (Houben 2000: 502), since there is no explicit reference to the Mahāvrata in the hymn and, for such a long hymn, little even to the soma sacrifice more generally. But there is a thematic connection between this hymn and the Mahāvrata. According to Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa XIX.3, the Mahāvrata fell on the winter solstice. Whatever else I.164 may be about, much of it concerns the sun in one way or another (e.g., vss. 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 25, 33, 44, 46, 48). The winter solstice, when the sun has halted its southward movement and is about to turn northward, would be a natural time to consider the sun and its appearance and therefore may provide the seasonal context for the hymn.

A second ritual context for the hymn is the Pravargya rite, which is an offering of heated milk and ghee to the Aśvins. In the classical Agniṣṭoma soma ritual, the Pravargya was performed twice daily on the three days leading up the soma-pressing day; originally, however, it may have been a rite independent of the soma ritual. The śrautasūtras (cf. van Buitenen 1968: 93, 96–98) prescribe the recitation of verses 26–28, 31 (=X.177.3), and 49 in the Pravargya, and at least verses 26–29 refer

directly to the Pravargya rite. Thus, as Houben (2000) has demonstrated, significant parts of this hymn are concerned with the Pravargya.

These two rituals, the Mahāvrata and the Pravargya, have one thing in common: they are the principal subjects of Āraṇyaka texts. The Āraṇyakas or "forest" books are later Vedic works that explored rituals and the interpretations of rituals thought to be too dangerous to be taught within the village. The R̥gvedic Āraṇyakas concern especially the Mahāvrata rite, and the Yajurvedic Āraṇyakas, the Pravargya. In our view this hymn was not primarily composed for recitation in a particular rite, although to be sure some of its mantras were ritually employed. Rather, this poem is an early example of Āraṇyaka-like interpretation. Its function is to disclose the meaning of the rites, particularly the Mahāvrata and Pravargya rites. It might seem odd that a R̥gvedic hymn could anticipate the later Āraṇyaka literature. However, according to the Śāṅkhāyana Gr̥hya Sūtra II.11.13, once a student has learned the saṃhitā, his teacher may guide him though the *rahasya*, the secret teaching, which the sūtra defines as the Āraṇyaka (cf. Oldenberg 1888: 291). Even if, as Oldenberg (293) argues, study of the rahasya meant the recitation of the mantras of the Mahāvrata, not study of the interpretation of the rite, the sūtra still points toward a direct pathway between the R̥gveda and the study that eventually came to constitute the R̥gvedic Āraṇyakas.

Key to grasping the meaning of the ritual is understanding the links between ritual acts and both the cosmos and the person. The complexity of the hymn derives especially from the multiplicity of reference of its verses, which connect ritual, cosmos, and person. Thus, the verses frequently refer simultaneously to the ritual (adhiyajñam) and to the world (adhidevatam), especially to the sun, and sometimes also to the human body or the human being (adhyātmam). There is no unproblematic verse in this hymn, but as an example, consider the possibilities of the first verse. Lines abc of that verse describe three brothers: the gray Hotar, the ravenous middle brother, and the brother with ghee-smeared back. Scholars have offered a variety of identifications for the brothers: the sun, wind, and fire (Sāyaṇa); the Āhavanīya or offering fire, the Dakṣiṇa or southern fire, and the Gārhapatya or household fire (Geldner); the original form of Agni, lightning, and the terrestrial Agni (Brown); and the sun, lightning, and the fire heating the Pravargya pot (Houben). It is likely that ancient hearers of the hymn made not one but several of these sets of identifications. In our view the verse has both a ritual (adhiyajñam) and a cosmic (adhidevatam) meaning. On the one hand, the three brothers can be a triad of ritual fires—either the three that Geldner sees or perhaps three phases of the sacrificial fire (gray embers, flaming fire, and fire flaring as it receives ghee). But they can also be a triad of cosmic fires (perhaps the sun, moon, and earthly fire, which correspond to the three ritual fires, or another of the identifications proposed above). In 1d the clanlord and his seven sons refer primarily to the sacrificer and the seven priests (cf. II.1.2). But the sacrificer might also be embodied in the Sun and the seven priests in Agni, or the clanlord might be the Sun and his seven sons, the stars of the constellation of the Seven Seers, Ursa Major. We will never know which of

these or what other interpretations the poet intended, but it is likely that the verse operates on several levels that connect ritual and cosmos.

The brief exegetical possibilities we have provided in the translation at best suggest primary referents, even though other secondary identifications may also be implied. So, for example, verses 2 and 3 move back and forth between adhiyajñam and adhidevatam meanings. The "seven" in 2a appear to be the "seven" of 1d, who are primarily priests (an adhiyajñam interpretation). However, the "single wheel" in 2a suggests the sun (adhidevatam) more than the ritual fire. This interpretation is supported by verse 48, since there the single wheel is the disk of the sun, which is drawn by the "single horse," Etaśa, the horse that pulls the Sun's chariot. In verse 3 the poet foregrounds ritual referents: the seven may again be priests, and, as is often the case, the chariot has now become a symbol of the sacrifice itself.

Another characteristic of this hymn, and another reason for its obscurity, is its frequent use of word play. The poet favors words that are not etymologically or semantically related but that sound as if they ought to be. For example, in verse 13d *sanā́d* "from of old" is echoed by *sánābhiḥ* "along with its nave" and in 14a *sánemi* "along with its felly." Or again, in 14a *ví vāvr̥ta* "has turned away" anticipates 14c *ā́vr̥tam* "covered over." In verse 5 *ajá* "unborn" can also mean "goat," and therefore can suggest Aja Ekapad, the "One-Footed Goat," a symbol of the Sun. According to Thieme (1987: 338), the poet even uses an implied homophone in verse 16. The stars of the constellation called "the Kr̥ttikās" are envisioned as women. The word for "women" in pāda a is *stríyaḥ* from the stem *strī́*. There is also a closely homophonous masculine stem *stŕ̥* "star," which does not occur in the verse but which would have been known to its hearers. The poet is saying that although the Kr̥ttikās are *strī́* "women," people call its constituents *stŕ̥* "stars," and therefore they speak of those Kr̥ttikās, even though they are women, as masculine "stars." As the verse concludes, only a poet who a master of words would understand this, and a poet who does understand it becomes even greater than his father, who would likely have been his teacher.

Thematic continuities and repeated use of similar poetic devices help unify the hymn. The hymn is also unified by its recursive structure created by parallelisms in its beginning and conclusion. For example, the poet speaks of the One (*éka*) in verse 6 and again toward the end of the hymn, in verse 46. In verse 6 that which is the "One" assumes the form of the Sun. At the other end of the poem, in verse 46, the One reappears and, through speech, takes the form not only of the Sun, but also of Agni, of Mātariśvan (the fire-bringer), and of other deities as well. Verses 7cd and 47 (as well as verse 51) describe the course of the waters upward by means of the rays of the sun and then downward as rain. Verses 2–3 and verse 48 describe the Sun's chariot and especially its single wheel. The final verses, 49–52, form an independent recursive unit. Verses 49 and 52 concern respectively the feminine Sarasvatī, the river goddess, and the masculine Sarasvant, who is Agni and the Sun according to 52ab. The linkage of fire and water or sun and rain is a constant throughout the hymn. It is reasserted in the verses fitted between those to Sarasvatī and Sarasvant. Verse 51 describes the cycle of the water to heaven and then back

down to earth and the correspondence between the sacrificial fire that invigorates the gods in heaven and the rain that invigorates the earth. Verse 50, which is quoted from X.90.16, refers to the cycle of the sacrifice, which like the water cycle operates between heaven and earth. The sacrifice has its origins in heaven, but it is now performed on earth and directed back toward heaven. Such formal devices help maintain a sense of coherence in a hymn that covers substantial ritual and thematic territory.

We do not propose to discuss the verses of the hymn in detail, but we do want to provide some additional information and to illustrate especially the movement in this hymn between different levels of meaning. Verse 8 refers to the story of Dawn's incest with her father, who is sometimes the Sun and sometimes Heaven. Depending on which of the two is her father—and either is possible in this verse—Dawn's child might be the Sun or Agni, the ritual fire. Verse 14 describes the movement of the Sun, but here it is its movement at night, when its bright side is turned away from earth and it moves from the west to the east. Verse 15 continues the description of the night (cf. Thieme 1987). The seven who are born at the same time might be the seven stars of the constellation of the Seven Seers. Of these stars six are paired (15b) and one is single (η Ursae Majoris).

In verses 20–22 is the famous riddle of the tree that has continued to remain a puzzle. The two birds have been interpreted as the waxing and waning moon (Thieme 1949: 55–73) the moon and the sun (Kuiper 1970: 127–28), the sun and the gharma pot (Houben 2000: 520–22), and two seekers of knowledge (Geldner). Whatever the birds may be, the verse ultimately concerns the acquisition of knowledge or inspiration, the "sweet fig" (vs. 22) at the top of the tree. Given the enigmatic character of this hymn, it is not surprising that this knowledge remains out of reach. Following the riddle of the two birds are three verses (23–25) that present the development of ritual speech that perhaps embodies the knowledge represented in the "sweet fig." According to verse 23 gāyatrī, triṣṭubh, and jagatī lines are extracted from hymns composed in the gāyatrī, triṣṭubh, and jagatī meters. That is to say, the shorter constituent, the poetic line, is drawn from the larger, the whole poem. But then verse 24 begins with the gāyatrī line, which is the basis for the "chant" (*arká*), the hymn that is sung, and the chant is the basis of the "melody" (*sā́man*) on which many verses may be sung. If so, then this verse begins with the shortest constituent, the line, from which develop the longer songs and chants. Similarly, the triṣṭubh line is the basis for longer recitations, śastras in the later tradition. The reason that the verse divides the chant and the recitation between the gāyatrī and triṣṭubh lines is that the eight-syllable gāyatrī line could be used as the basis for chants in the R̥gvedic tradition, while the eleven-syllable triṣṭubh line was used in recitations. Thus in lines ab, reversing verse 23, the shorter (the chanted or recited line) is the basis for the longer (the chant or recitation). This order is continued in c, which moves from individual lines to the complete recitation. In d the shortest constituent of all, the syllable, is the basis for the largest constituent, everything that is chanted or recited by the seven priests. This movement from long (the composed

hymn) to short (the poetic line) to long (chants and recitations), and finally from shortest (the syllable) to longest (everything chanted or recited) knits together the entirety of ritual speech and ultimately concentrates it in the syllable. As such, these two verses anticipate verse 46, in which the "One" is the basis for many names. Verse 25 also presents the smallest constituent as the basis for the larger. According to it the gāyatrī stanza is the foundation for the longer jagatī stanza and the *rathantara* chant. The gāyatrī verse is the basis of the jagatī, because the jagatī verse has twice the number of syllables as a gāyatrī (48 and 24 respectively). It is the basis of the rathantara chant because the rathantara melody is set to VII.32.22–23, verses in bṛhatī and satobṛhatī meters. Verses in these two meters are combinations of jagatī and gāyatrī lines. The gāyatrī is thus the foundation of both the jagatī and rathantara and as such surpasses both of them.

The theme of inspired Speech (Vāc) is taken up again in verses 36–42. It is introduced in verses 36 and 37, in which the poet shifts attention to ancient *ṛ́ṣi*s "seers," whose "insights" and "thought" are brought into the present by poet. However, the poet does not understand his own inspiration (vs. 37), which is finally a gift of the gods or, more specifically, a gift of Agni. According to verses 39–42, this inspired Speech descends to the human realm like water in order to sustain life on earth. While the emphasis in these verses is on Speech as a cosmic principle and human possession, a specific ritual reference is also not far away. As Geldner observes, verse 40 accompanies I.164.26–27 in Atharvaveda Śaunaka 7.73, a hymn to the gharma drink of the Pravargya rite.

In verses 26–29 the hymn focuses on the Pravargya rite. Verse 26 begins with the cow, whose milk will be the offering, and then describes the heating of the gharma pot, into which milk will be poured. In 27a the gharma pot makes a sound *hiṅ* as it is heated, and because it contains milk, the pot now becomes the cow. Her calf is probably Agni, an identification supported by 28ab, which can describe a pot placed on the fire. In verse 29 the meaning of the cow has shifted again, and she is now the milk "enclosed" within the gharma pot. When milk is poured into the heated pot, a pillar of flame erupts in what is the most dramatic visual moment in the entire soma rite as now performed. In 29cd the milk or the cow thus becomes lightning, exploding upward from the pot. Although the reference to the Pravargya rite is less obvious in verse 30, the verse may refer to the boiling ghee in the gharma pot to which the milk is added (Houben 2000: 510) and therefore to an earlier stage of the ritual than does verse 29. Houben's interpretation of verse 30 is partly based on the observation that verse 31 is the mantra prescribed by the śrautasūtras for the rite of heating and gazing at the gharma pot, which also belongs to an earlier stage of the ritual. Houben may be correct in seeing a reference to the Pravargya rite, but both verses 30 and 31 are also open to additional interpretations. For example, the "herdsman" in 31a could be the breath (cf. Geldner; also Houben 2000: 508–9) or the Sun (Sāyaṇa) or both.

Similarly, Houben (2000: 523) also explains verse 43 as reflecting the Pravargya rite. He understands the "dung-smoke" to be smoke from the fire fueled by horse

dung that is used to fumigate the gharma pot. The "dappled bullock" could then be the mixture of milk and ghee that is heated in the gharma pot. But again, this verse can be more than a description of the Pravargya. The "first foundations" (pāda d) should refer not just to the beginning of a particular ritual performance, but to the institution of the sacrifice (cf. X.90), and therefore point to an additional interpretation that locates the form and origin of the sacrifice in the cosmos. The "midpoint" (*viṣūvánt*) can refer to the Viṣūvant day (as in I.84.10), the summer solstice, which is the ritual midpoint of a year-long *sattra* ceremony. This suggests that the fire beyond the earthly fire is the sun, perhaps wrapped in cloud, the "dung-smoke," since the solstice should occur around the beginning of the rainy season. The sun can also be the "bullock," which is "dappled" because of clouds or sunspots. The "heroes" can be priests, but they may also be gods, who are gathered around the sun. All these ritual and macrocosmic interpretations are not exclusive since, according to the Āraṇyakas and Brāhmaṇas, the heated gharma pot can represent the sun (e.g., KauB VIII.3, TĀ V.8–9).

In verse 33 the Sun is the likely speaker, although Geldner's idea that the speaker is the Wind and Breath would maintain the dual reference to cosmos and person. The imagery of these verses appears again in verse 38, in which the subject of lines ab may be the breath (Geldner) or the Sun. The image of the birth of an embryo in verse 33 leads to verses 34–35, which speak of "the navel of the living world" and the "seed" or semen of the horse. These two verses form a *brahmodya*, a ritual exchange of question and answer, in the Horse Sacrifice (ĀśvŚS X.1–3, ŚāṅkhŚS XVI.6.5–6). The verses are appropriate to the Horse Sacrifice and may have been adopted into this hymn from that sacrifice. Here the verses continue the reference to heaven and earth and to the sacrifice, which becomes the image of the world.

1. This treasured one, the gray Hotar—his middle brother is the ravenous one;
   his third brother is the one with ghee-smeared back. In him I saw the clanlord with his seven sons.
2. The seven harness the chariot with a single wheel [=the Sun]. A single horse with seven names draws it.
   Triple-naved [=with three seasons?] is the unaging, unassailable wheel, on which all these living beings rest.
3. As its seven horses, the seven [=the priests] who stand upon this chariot [=the sacrifice] draw the seven-wheeled (chariot).
   Seven sisters [=voices of the priests] together cry out (the words) in which the seven names of the cows [=poetic speech] are imprinted.
4. Who has seen the first one [=the Sun/Agni] as he is being born, when his boneless (mother) [=the Waters?] carries the one having bones [=the one who is a living being]?
   Where is the life, blood, and breath of the earth? Who will approach the knowing one to ask this?

5. Naïve, not understanding, in my mind I ask about these imprinted tracks of the gods.
   Upon the full-grown calf [=the fire] the poets have stretched the seven warp-threads (of the sacrifice) in order to weave.
6. Unperceptive, I ask also the perceptive poets about this in order to know, since I am unknowing:
   What also is the One in the form of the Unborn [=the Sun] that has propped apart these six realms (of heaven and earth)?
7. Let him speak here, who knows the imprinted track of this treasured bird [=the Sun].
   The cows [=rain clouds] yield milk [=rain] from his head [=the Sun]. Clothing themselves in a cloak, they have drunk water with the foot [=the Sun's rays].
8. The mother [=Dawn] gave her father [=the Sun/Heaven] a share in the truth, for in the beginning, through her insight, she united (with him) by her mind.
   Recoiling, she whose essence was her child [=Agni/the Sun] was pierced (by her father). Just those offering their reverence went to the (morning) invocation.
9. The mother was harnessed to the yoke-pole of the sacrificial reward; her child stood up amid the penned cows.
   The calf [=Agni] bellowed and looked toward the cow of every color [=Dawn], three wagon-treks (in the distance).
10. Carrying three mothers [=earths] and three fathers [=heavens] alone, he [=the Sun] stands upright: they do not cause him to weary.
    On the back of yonder heaven they [=the gods] recite the speech that knows everything but does not inspire everyone.
11. Twelve-spoked, the wheel of truth [=the Sun] ever rolls around heaven—yet not to old age.
    Upon it, o Agni, stand seven hundred twenty sons in pairs [=the nights and days of the year].
12. They speak of the father [=the Moon] with five feet [=the seasons] and twelve forms [=the months], the overflowing one in the upper half of heaven.
    But these others speak of the far-gazing one [=the Sun] in the nearer (half) fixed on (the chariot) with seven wheels [=the Sun, Moon, and visible planets] and six spokes [=the seasons, in a different reckoning].
13. In the five-spoked wheel [=the year] that rolls round—on that do all living beings take their stand.
    Its axle does not become hot, though its load is heavy. From of old it, along with its nave, does not break apart.

14. Along with its felly, the unaging wheel [=the night Sun] has turned away. Harnessed to the outstretched (yoke-pole) [=the airy realm?], ten (horses) draw it.
Covered over, the eye of the Sun moves through the airy realm. All living beings are fixed upon it.
15. They speak of the seventh of those who are born at the same time as the one born alone, saying, “the twins, the Seers born of the gods, are only six.”
What (places) are desired by these [=the Seven Seers] are distributed according to their spheres. While (the one) [=the pole star] stands still, the ones varied in appearance [=the stars of the Seven Seers] quiver.
16. Though they [=the Kr̥ttikās, the Pleiades] are women, yet they speak of them as men to me. He who has eyes sees; the blind man does not differentiate.
One who is a poet, a (poet’s) son, perceives them. One who recognizes these (women), he will be the father of his father.
17. Below the upper (realm), above the lower here [=at the horizon], the cow [=Dawn] carrying her calf [=the Sun] has stood up by her foot.
In which direction is she? Toward which side did she go away? Where does she give birth, for it is not within the fold?
18. Below the upper (realm), above the lower here is he [=the Sun] who knows his father.
Showing himself to be a poet, who will proclaim this here: from whence has divine thought been born?
19. What (chariots [=sacrifices?] come) this way—they say that those (will go) away; what (chariots go) away—they say that those (will come) this way.
O Soma and Indra, (the deeds) that you two have done, these draw (those chariots) like (horses) harnessed to the yoke-pole of the airy realm.
20. Two well-feathered (birds), yokemates and companions, embrace the same tree.
Of those two the one eats the sweet fig; the other, not eating, keeps watch.
21. Where the well-feathered (birds), never blinking, cry out for a share of immortality and for the ritual distributions,
here the forceful herdsman of the whole living world, the insightful one, has entered me, the naïve one.
22. Just that tree on which all the honey-eating, well-feathered ones settle and give birth,
they say, has the sweet fig at its top. He who does not know the father will not reach up to that.

23. How the gāyatrī (track) [=gāyatrī line] is based upon a gāyatrī (hymn) or how a triṣṭubh (track) [=triṣṭubh line] was fashioned out of a triṣṭubh (hymn),
    or how the jagat track [=jagatī line] is based on the jagat [=jagatī] (hymn)—only those who know this have reached immortality.
24. By the gāyatrī (track) [=line] one measures the chant; by the chant the melody; by the triṣṭubh (track) [=line] (one measures) the recitation;
    by the two-footed and the four-footed recitation the (full) recitation. By the syllable the seven voices assume their measure.
25. By the jagat [=jagatī] (stanza) he buttressed the river in heaven; in the rathantara (chant), he watched over the Sun.
    They say that there are three kindling sticks [=three lines in a gāyatrī stanza] belonging to the gāyatrī (stanza). By its greatness it [=the gāyatrī stanza] has passed beyond those in greatness.
26. I summon this milk-cow giving good milk, and the deft-handed milker will milk her.
    Savitar will impel the most excellent impetus in us. The gharma pot has been heated: this shall I proclaim.
27. Making the sound *hiṅ*, the goods-mistress of goods, seeking her calf, has come near through (my) thinking.
    Let this inviolable cow give milk to the Aśvins. Let her increase for our great good fortune.
28. The cow bellowed after her blinking calf. She made the sound *hiṅ* against his head (for him) to bellow.
    Lowing toward his hot jaw, she bellows her bellow and swells her swell of milk.
29. This hums—that by which the cow is enclosed. She bellows her bellow, resting upon the smoky (fire).
    Because she has put down (what is) mortal with the sound "chit-chit," becoming lightning, she pushed away her covering.
30. Breathing, life rests (though remaining) on its headlong course, stirring (though) steadfast in the midst of the dwelling places.
    The living one keeps moving by the will of the dead one; the immortal one shares the same womb with the mortal one.
31. I saw the herdsman who never settles down, roaming here and afar along his paths.
    Clothing himself in those that converge and diverge, he moves back and forth among living beings.
32. He who created him does not know him. He is far away from him who has seen him.
    He is surrounded within the womb of his mother. Having many offspring, he has entered into destruction.

33. [The Sun:] "My father, my progenitor, is Heaven; here is my navel. My mother, this great Earth, is my relation.
My womb is within the two open cups [=Heaven and Earth]. Here my father placed the child [=the Sun] of his daughter [=Dawn]."
34. I ask you about the farthest end of the earth. I ask where is the navel of the living world.
I ask you about the seed of the bull(-like) horse. I ask about the highest heaven of speech.
35. This altar here is the farthest end of the earth. This sacrifice here is the navel of the living world.
This soma here is the seed of the bull(-like) horse. This formulator here is the highest heaven of speech.
36. The seven children of the (two world-)halves [=the Seven Seers], the seed of the living world, take their place by the direction of Viṣṇu in the spreading expanse.
By their insights and their thought these encompassing perceivers of inspired words encompass (everything) everywhere.
37. I do not understand what sort of thing I am here: though bound, I roam about in secret by my thinking.
When the first-born of truth [=Agni] has come to me, only then do I attain a share of this speech here.
38. He goes inward and outward, controlled by his own will—he, the immortal one of the same womb as the mortal one.
Those two are ever going apart in different directions. They observe the one; they do not observe the other.
39. The syllable of the verse, upon which all the gods have settled, is in the highest heaven—
he who does not know that (syllable), what will he accomplish by his verse? Only those who know it sit together here.
40. Because you would become blessed, feeding upon good pasturage, so then we would also be blessed.
Feed on grass always, o inviolable cow [=Speech]! Coming here, drink pure water!
41. The buffalo-cow [=Speech] has bellowed, fashioning oceans. One-footed and two-footed, she is four-footed,
having become eight-footed and nine-footed: she has a thousand syllables in the highest heaven.
42. Seas flow everywhere from her: by that the four directions live,
from that the syllable flows, upon that does everything live.
43. At the midpoint, beyond this nearer (fire), I saw dung-smoke from afar.
Heroes cooked the dappled bullock. These were the first foundations (of the rite).

44. Three long-haired ones gaze out in succession: in a year one [=Agni] of them shears away (the land) for himself;
 another [=the Sun] gazes upon everything with his powers; the rush of another [=Wind] is visible, but not his form.
45. Speech is measured in four feet [/quarters]. Brahmins of inspired thinking know these.
 They do not set in motion the three that are imprinted in secret; the sons of Manu speak the fourth (foot/quarter) of speech.
46. They say it is Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni, and also it is the winged, well-feathered (bird) of heaven [=the Sun].
 Though it is One, inspired poets speak of it in many ways. They say it is Agni, Yama, and Mātariśvan.
47. Along the dark course, tawny well-feathered (birds) [=flames], clothing themselves in the waters, fly up toward heaven.
 These have returned here (as rain) from the seat of truth [=heaven]. Only then is the earth moistened with ghee.
48. The chariot-wheel (of the Sun) is one, its wheel-segments are twelve, its wheel-naves are three: who understands this?
 They [=the days] that wander on and on are fitted together on that, like three hundred pegs, like sixty (more).
49. Your breast, which is ever full, which is joy itself, by which you make all desirable things prosper,
 which confers treasure and finds wealth, which brings good gifts—o Sarasvatī, you prepare that to suckle us here.
50. With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice: these were the first foundations.
 These, its greatnesses, followed to heaven's vault, where the ancient Sādhyas and the gods are.
51. This water remains the same: it goes up and down throughout the days.
 Thunderstorms vivify the earth, and fires vivify heaven.
52. The heavenly well-feathered, lofty bird, child of the waters, and beautiful (child) of the plants,
 the one bringing satisfaction by the rains from what is bounded by waters: Sarasvant!—him do I call upon again and again for help.

The last collection of hymns in the first maṇḍala, I.165–191, is attributed to Agastya, who according to later tradition was the son of Mitra and Varuṇa and of the Apsaras Urvaśī. Several times in his hymns, however, Agastya refers to himself as Mānya, the son of Māna (e.g., I.165.14–15, 177.5, 184.4). The collection opens with hymns to the Maruts or to Indra and the Maruts (165–173) and hymns to Indra (174–178). Somewhat oddly placed after these is a hymn that takes the form of a dialogue between Agastya and his wife Lopāmudrā (179). Next are hymns to

the Aśvins (180–184), followed by a series of single hymns, first hymns to Heaven and Earth (185) and to the All Gods (186), then a praise of food (187), an Āprī hymn (188) and an Agni hymn (189), a hymn to Bṛhaspati (190), and the concluding hymn of the first maṇḍala, a charm against poisonous animals (191). Like the collection of Dīrghatamas, the Agastya hymns thus form an unusual sequence.

Also like the Dīrghatamas hymns, the Agastya hymns are stylistically creative, especially in his hymns to Indra and the Maruts. He uses puns and verbal play (e.g., 167), suppression of key words and ambiguous reference (171, 174), intricate similes and unexpected turns of phrase (168, 169), syntactic innovation (168, 173, 174), and striking imagery (173, 176). This lively and difficult poetry marks Agastya as one of the great masters of the Ṛgvedic tradition. He is best known for three hymns, 165, 170, and 171, which together describe how Indra and the Maruts argued over a sacrifice offered by Agastya and were finally reconciled with one another, and for his dialogue with Lopāmudrā (179), which turns on the tension between the ascetic ideal and the responsibility to continue the family lineage. But both the set of Indra and Marut hymns and the dialogue with Lopāmudrā also concern questions of ritual innovation that define Agastya not only as a great poet but also as a significant figure in the development of Vedic ritual practice.

In all but six of his hymns Agastya concludes with his signature pāda *vidyā́meṣáṃ vṛjánaṃ jīrádānum* "May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters." Also 165–168 share the same final verse, as do 175 and 176, and 183 and 184.

I.165 Indra and the Maruts

Indra (1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10–12), the Maruts (3, 5, 7, 9), and Agastya (13–15)
15 verses: triṣṭubh

Ṛgveda I.165, 170, and 171 together tell a story in which Indra and the Maruts argue over their rights to a sacrifice offered by the sage Agastya. In the absence of a full, contemporary narrative, it is difficult to reconstruct the events of this story. Apparently Agastya's sacrifice was originally intended for the Maruts. Indra arrived at the place of the sacrifice first, however, and complained that nothing was being given to him (170). Agastya, frightened by the god (cf. 171.4), then gave the sacrifice to Indra. At this point the Maruts arrived expecting that the sacrifice would be offered to them. Agastya tried to appease the Maruts (171), who were understandably angry that the sacrifice had gone to Indra. Indra and the Maruts then confront one another (165), and each side asserts its power and worthiness to receive the sacrifice. Ultimately, however, the Maruts concede Indra's superiority (165.9), and Indra and the Maruts become reconciled with one another (vs. 11) and share the sacrifice. At the very end of the hymn the poet states one of the reasons that he recalls this story: he hopes to be reconciled to the gods, just as the Maruts were reconciled to Indra.

Stanley Insler has proposed the attractive theory that this group of hymns forms a small *Aindramāruta* epic, whose purpose was to justify a ritual change that occurred during the time of the poet. In the classical Vedic ritual the Midday Pressing is dedicated to Indra along with the Maruts, but for much of the core R̥gveda the Midday Pressing belongs to Indra alone. This narrative tells how the Maruts also came to share the soma along with Indra.

In verse 9d we read *kariṣyā́ḥ* with Oldenberg and others, and in verse 15c we read *'vayā́m*, also with Oldenberg.

1. [Indra:] With what beauty have the Maruts—all of the same age, all of the same nest—joined altogether?
   With what thought? From where have these antelopes come? With a desire for good things (these) bulls chant explosively.
2. In whose sacred formulations have the youths found delight? Who turned the Maruts here to the rite,
   (thinking,) "By what great thought shall we bring them to rest, soaring like falcons in the midspace?"
3. [Leader of the Maruts:] Why do you travel alone, Indra, although you are great, o lord of the settlements? Is this proper for you?
   Confronting us, are you going to negotiate with us beautiful ones? You should tell us what you have for us, o master of the fallow bays.
4. [Indra:] The formulations, the thoughts, the pressed soma are good fortune for me. My explosive power rises; the pressing-stone is brought forth to me.
   The hymns hope for, receive me joyfully. These two fallow bays carry us here to them.
5. [Leader of the Maruts:] For this reason, yoking (our chariots) with nearer (horses) that guide themselves and making our bodies beautiful,
   we now yoke antelopes also (as our lead team) by our great powers, for you have experienced our independent will, Indra.
6. [Indra:] Where was this independent will of yours, Maruts, when you tasked me alone to smash the serpent?
   For I, the powerful and mighty, possessed of might, humbled with my weapons those of every rival.
7. [Leader of the Maruts:] You did many things when we were there, with our united manly powers (ready) to be deployed, o bull;
   we shall do many things in accordance with your purpose, o most powerful Indra, when we, o fellow Maruts, shall wish it.
8. [Indra:] O Maruts, I smashed Vr̥tra with my Indrian strength, having become mighty through my own rage.
   Bearing my mace in my arms, I made these all-gleaming waters go easily to Manu.

9. [Leader of the Maruts:] This is conceded to you, generous one: There is no one like you known among the gods.
   Neither one who is born nor one who was born will attain you. What *you will do, do!—o you who are grown fully strong.
10. [Indra:] Even if I am alone, let my force be far ranging (to do) what in my daring I shall now do according to my inspired thinking,
   for I am known as the powerful one, Maruts. What things I shall set in motion, just I, Indra, am master of these.
11. The praise song here has exhilarated me, o Maruts, the formulation worthy to be heard that you created for me, o men—
   for me, (who am) Indra, the bull and strong combatant—for (me), your companion as my companions, for me myself by you yourselves.
12. It is just so: Reflecting me here and receiving fame and refreshments as my irreproachable (warrior band),
   you, who are to be seen all around with your shimmering colors, have pleased me, and you will please me now, o Maruts.
13. [Narrator:] Now who has given liberally to you here, Maruts? Journey forth to your companions here, o companions!
   Knowing our thoughts intimately, o you shimmering ones, be aware of these, my truths.
14. [Indra:] Since the praise poet will here offer friendship (to you) as if to his friend, (and since) the wisdom of the son of Māna [=Agastya] has brought us here,
   turn here to the inspired poet, o Maruts. The singer chants these formulations for you.
15. [Narrator:] This is your praise song, Maruts—this song of the praise poet Māndārya, son of Māna.
   With his refreshing offering he would beg *reconciliation (with you) for himself. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.166 Maruts

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14–15

Many of the usual Marut themes are present in this hymn: the awesome and terrifying power of the thunderstorm (vss. 4–6), their glittering bedecked bodies and chariots (vss. 9–11), their aid to pious men (vss. 2–3, 7–8), their role as singers for their comrade Indra (vss. 7, 11). Although the order of elements seems somewhat random, these praises are set within a tight frame. Verse 1 begins “we shall proclaim their greatness,” which is echoed exactly by verse 12 “this is your greatness”: the

promised proclamation has reached its end. Verse 13 is similarly structured, beginning "this is your kinship. . . ," and the final verse (14) before the refrain sets forth what the poet wishes from the Maruts.

Punctuating the hymn is an awareness of the balance between their past glories and benevolence and the ones of the present day (see esp. vss. 1, 8, 13), and the model of their previous generosity to sacrificers is given embodiment in verse 13, where Manu's offering of poetry induces the Maruts to appear to him with their favors.

1. We shall now proclaim this to the overpowering race—proclaim their previous greatness to the beacon of the bull.
   As if through kindling on your course, you powerfully noisy Maruts, as if in battle, produce your powers, o able ones.
2. Holding their honey close like their own son, the playful ones play, eager at the rites.
   The Rudras [=Maruts] approach the reverent man with help; the self-powerful ones do not neglect the maker of oblations.
3. To whom the immortal helpers have given riches and prosperity—to the man who does pious service with the oblation—
   for him the Maruts, like (steeds) spurred on, sprinkle the many realms with milk—they are joy itself.
4. Of you who with your powers enveloped the realms—your spontaneous dashes swooped forth.
   All creatures and habitations take fright. Brilliant is your course when your spears have been extended.
5. When the manly ones of turbulent course make the mountains roar, or have stirred the back of heaven,
   every tree takes fright at your drive; every plant bends forward as if driving a chariot.
6. You, mighty Maruts, you invulnerable band—with kind attention deliver us to your benevolence.
   Where your missile with its gory teeth scrapes (a path), mightily it liquefies (the trees) as a well-placed (goad) sets the livestock flowing.
7. (The Maruts) whose generosity is (as steady as) a pillar, whose gifts are not withdrawn, the restless ones, well-praised at the rites—
   they chant forth the chant for the drinking of the exhilarating (soma); they know the foremost manly deeds of the hero [=Indra].
8. With your strongholds with a hundred coils, o Maruts, guard that man from crookedness and evil whom you (previously) aided,
   whom you (now) protect from (evil) utterance amid the flourishing of his descendants, you mighty, powerful ones who confer abundance.
9. All good things are set on your chariots, Maruts—like powers competing with each other.

On your shoulders, in the vanguard, are spangles; your axle turns the wheels separately but at the same time.

10. Many good things are on your manly arms, on your breasts brilliants, dazzling ornaments,
    on your shoulders antelope (skins), on your wheel-rims razors. Like birds their wings, your splendors have spread out.
11. Great by their greatness, extending, extensive, visible from afar like the heavenly (realms) with their stars,
    gladdening, good with their tongues, sounding with their mouths, the Maruts, linked to Indra, encircling him with their rhythm.
12. This is your greatness, o well-born Maruts: your gift is long(-lasting), like the commandment of Aditi.
    For the person of good action to whom you gave it, not even Indra makes it go awry through dereliction.
13. This is your kinship to the earlier generation, o Maruts, that as immortals you many times favored its laud.
    By reason of this poetic insight (of Manu's), having favored his attentive hearing, the superior men [=Maruts] showed themselves to Manu all at once through their wondrous deeds.
14. The abundance stemming from you, o powerful Maruts—through which we shall stay powerfully swollen for a long time,
    toward which the people in the community will stretch out—to that might I attain, *to my desire, with these sacrifices.
15. Here is a praise for you, o Maruts, here a hymn from Māndārya, the respectful bard.
    With refreshment he would beg propitiation for himself. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.167 Maruts (except Indra 1)

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A particularly fine example of Agastya's poetic skill. The first few verses invite first Indra (vs. 1) and then the Maruts (vs. 2) to come to us; the last few verses (8–10) before the refrain (vs. 11) celebrate the massive strength of the Maruts (vss. 8cd–9), and again express the hope that Indra and the Maruts will stand by us (vs. 10), with a curious detour through the topic of the Ādityas' protective powers (vs. 8ab).

But the heart of the hymn (vss. 3–7) is devoted to the Maruts' relationship with their consort Rodasī, whose name is identical, save for accent, with the dual referring to the "two world-halves" (*rodasī́* versus *ródasī*, though the latter can also sometimes be used for Rodasī). The verses are marked by what in Classical Sanskrit poetry would be called śleṣa ("punning"), and the tone is curiously mixed: Rodasī is both

extravagantly praised and at the same time scornfully compared to a loose woman, with those two incompatible attitudes conveyed in the same words. (Unfortunately, the understated deftness of these verbal plays is overwhelmed by our necessarily labored and clumsy explanations.) For example, in verse 3 Rodasī is compared to a young woman running after men by going to the public gaming hall, but also compared to fine ceremonial speech appropriate to a public occasion. The same word (*sabhā́vatī*) is used both for her shameful appearance in the public hall and her role as speech honored in public. In verse 4 the word *sādhāraṇyā́* "common" is used both of the Maruts' joint cherishing of Rodasī and in a simile comparing her to a whore. (This kind of verbal condemnation of a polyandrous woman is familiar in later Sanskrit in the taunts sometimes directed to the noble Draupadī, wife of the five Pāṇḍavas in the Mahābhārata.) A complex pun in the second half of verse 4 plays with the partial identity of Rodasī and the two world-halves; the grammatical aspects of this pun cannot be treated here. Despite the somewhat slighting treatment in the similes of verses 3–4, Rodasī takes on the role of bride in verses 5–6 by mounting the nuptial chariot like the mythological model of the bride, Sūryā. This depiction of ceremonial marriage provides a transition to the ritual here-and-now (vss. 6cd–7), where not only the Maruts, but also Rodasī along with the Wives of the Gods, appear at our ritual.

1. A thousand are your forms of help to us, o Indra, a thousand your most welcomed refreshments, o possessor of the fallow bays,
   a thousand your riches, to exhilarate us. Let your thousandfold prizes come near to us.
2. Let the Maruts, masters of artifice, drive hither to us with their help, or with their preeminent, heaven-lofty (riches?),
   even when they, while furthest away, are running their teams on the far shore of the sea—
3. (The Maruts), to whom (Rodasī) has been joined, positioned well, up close to them like their own spear—she ghee-rich, garbed in gold,
   roving in secret, like a young woman going to men when she's bound for the public hall [/provided with a public forum] like ceremonial speech.
4. Away (went) the resplendent, irrepressible Maruts in their flood; they joined (with her) in common, as if with a common (whore).
   The fearsome ones did not push Rodasī away as they did push the two world-halves apart. The gods took pleasure in strengthening (her/them), for companionship.
5. If it please her ladyship to accompany them—Rodasī with unloosened braid had her mind set on the men—
   like Sūryā she mounts the chariot of the one who does honor, she whose face is turbulent like the approach of a cloud.
6. The youths caused the young woman to mount for beauty, she steadfast and commingling (with them) at the ceremonies.
   When the chant is accompanied by oblations for you, o Maruts, and the one who has pressed soma, seeking friendship, sings the song,

7. I proclaim what of theirs is worthy of proclamation, that the greatness of the Maruts is truly present,
   when in company with them, her mind set on the bulls, she, self-reliant and firm, brings with her the well-portioned Wives (of the Gods).
8. Mitra and Varuṇa (and Aryaman) protect from the unspeakable (fault); Aryaman makes the unlaudable (men) atone.
   And the unstirrable fixed things stir, (when) your wish-granting (flock) has grown strong, o Maruts.
9. For they have not reached the limit of your swelling strength, o Maruts, nearby to us nor even in the distance.
   These (Maruts), swollen with bold swelling strength, have boldly hemmed in hatred like a flood.
10. Might we today, might we tomorrow call ourselves dearest to Indra in the competition,
   (as) we (did) before, and let this be a great thing for us through the days: let the R̥bhu-ruling (flock) consisting of (these) superior men [=Maruts] stay by us.
11. Here is a praise for you, Maruts, here a hymn from Māndārya, the respectful bard.
   With refreshment he would beg propitiation for himself. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.168 Maruts

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8–10

After an appeal to the Maruts from the poet-sacrificer (vs. 1), the hymn settles down with gusto to a description of the Maruts as thunderstorm, a description executed with all of Agastya's artistry. It is rich with elaborate and trickily constructed similes and with striking images and jarring turns of phrase. For the latter, consider the first simile in verse 2: "self-produced like fissures." Neither the contents of the simile itself nor its application to the Maruts is immediately clear, but on further reflection the "self-produced fissures" call to mind earthquakes and their sudden and unpredictable power to open fissures in the ground, and this image seems an apt comparandum with the Maruts and their impetuous exercise of their power. Agastya plays with syntax, too, as in 5b where the verb "quiver" is used transitively in the frame of the simile and intransitively in the simile itself. In fact, in this hymn Agastya seems to want to deploy as many different types of structurally and conceptually twisted images as he can (the technical details of all of which we cannot treat here).

The theme throughout is that, although the Maruts display great violence in their stormy onslaught, the result is the welcome and fructifying rain (see most

clearly vs. 7). This theme is nicely expressed in 3cd, which juxtaposes and combines the warlike and the peaceful: a spear compared to a woman (see also the previous hymn, 167.3), and dagger and bangle placed together in their hands, a pairing emphasized by their phonological similarity: *khādíś ca kr̥tíś ca*.

1. With sacrifice after sacrifice to you (performed always) in the same way (am I) victorious. Thought after thought have you received, as they travel to you, the gods.
   With well-twisted (hymns) might I turn you our direction, for the welfare of the two world-halves, for great help.
2. They who, self-produced like fissures, self-strong, were born to refreshment, to sun(light)—the shakers—
   numbering in thousands like the waves of the waters, to be extolled [/*bound?] by the mouth like cows, like oxen.
3. They who, like soma drinks, pressed when their stalks are satiated, once they have been drunk, sit in the hearts like friends—
   on their shoulders (a spear) clings tight like a clinging woman; in their hands both bangle and dagger are placed together.
4. Self-yoked, (their horses) have driven down from heaven at will. Spur (them) on with your own breath, (as if) with a whip, you immortals.
   Dustless, powerfully born, the Maruts with their glinting spears make even the fixed places stir.
5. O you Maruts with lightning as your spears, who is the one among you who sets (the fixed places) to quivering by your own breath, like someone with his tongue quivering between his jaws?
   (You) who stir up the wastelands on your journey as if stirring refreshments [=rain], who propel many, like Etaśa [=Sun's horse] on his daily round.
6. Where is the farther (part) of this great dusky realm, where the closer (part), o Maruts, in which you have driven?
   When you stir up the firmly compacted entity like loose pieces, you fly through the turbulent flood with a stone.
7. Violent like your winning yet bringing sun(light), turbulent yet ripening and swelling, o Maruts—
   your gift [=rain] is welcome like the ritual gift-cow of a donor, and it is of broad expanse and scintillating like lordly (Rodasī).
8. The rivers sound in response to your wheel-rims, when they raise up the speech coming from the (storm) clouds.
   The lightning-flashes smile down on the earth, when the Maruts sprinkle ghee upon her.
9. Pr̥śni gave birth to the turbulent face of the unruly Maruts for great joy [/battle].
   They, in shared delight, begat the formless (cloud) mass. Just after that they surveyed their vigorous self-power.

10. Here is a praise for you, Maruts, here a hymn from Māndārya, the respectful bard.
With refreshment he would beg propitiation for himself. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.169 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except virāj 2

The subject of this hymn is the tense ritual standoff and negotiated settlement between Indra and the Maruts—who both came to Agastya's sacrifice expecting it as exclusive offering—a situation also depicted in I.170–171 and the great dialogue hymn I.165. Although the Anukramaṇī names Indra as sole dedicand, the Maruts appear in every verse but 4 (though not by name in 6); however, Indra is the only god addressed—in fact, a vocative *indra* and a form of the 2nd singular pronoun appear in each of the first six verses and in the last one (8)—while the Maruts are always in the 3rd person. There is thus a definite imbalance in their roles.

The poet begins by flattering Indra and suggesting that he is superior to the Maruts, but soon implies that the Maruts are getting ahead (vs. 2), and cooperation is suggested (vss. 1ab, 3). In the middle verses (4–5) the poet begs Indra for wealth in the sacrificial context (as shown by the priestly gift cow in verse 4), and this sets the stage for the reconciliation between Indra and the Maruts on the sacrificial ground (vss. 6–7). In the final verse Indra is urged to join with the Maruts in giving us wealth, and is promised in return that he will be praised by the gods, that is, by the Maruts, who, however, will also receive praise—from the poet-sacrificers.

Not surprisingly, since Agastya is the poet, the hymn is full of intriguing difficulties and studied similes, such as the superficially puzzling maxim in the second half of verse 3, which turns on the paradox of waters producing dry land (by silting up the channel?).

1. Indra, you are the one who goes (before) even the great one [=Marut flock] as it *drives; you are the defender even from great dereliction.
O ritual adept, as observant one win the favors of the Maruts for us, for they [=favors] are dearest to you.
2. They have hitched themselves up, Indra—your (Maruts), who know as their own the tributes stemming from all communities among mortals.
The battle-thrust of the Maruts is racing ahead in the winning of the prize-contest whose reward is the sun.
3. This spear of yours has been fixed among us, Indra; the Maruts speed the formless (cloud) mass, with all its gear.
For even a fire blazing in the brushwood can produce pleasurable offerings, as waters do an island.

4. You, Indra—give us wealth, like a present in the form of a most formidable priestly gift cow.
   And the praises that will be enjoyable to you and to Vāyu will swell with victory-prizes, as (priestly gift cows) swell their breast of honey.
5. In you, Indra, are most overflowing riches, the leaders of whoever seeks the truth.
   Let the Maruts have mercy upon us, the gods who up till now have provided the way, as it were.
6. Drive forth toward the men who grant rewards [=Maruts], Indra. Take your place on the earthly seat of the great one [=Marut flock],
   now when their wide-striding antelopes have come to a standstill, like the manly forces of a stranger at a ford.
7. The trampling of the antelopes of the fearsome, irrepressible Maruts is heard opposite as they come here,
   those who fly with their helpers in swarms to the mortal who seeks battles, as if to a debtor.
8. You, Indra, along with the Maruts—for the Mānas dig out proliferating riches, tipped with cows, destined for all men.
   You will be praised, o god, by the gods [=Maruts] (also) being praised.
   – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.170 Indra

Indra (1, 3), Agastya (2, 5), Indra or Agastya (4)
5 verses: bṛhatī 1, anuṣṭubh 2–4, triṣṭubh 5

For this hymn see the introduction to I.165. This hymn is the opening of the story, in which Indra confronts Agastya, who has prepared an offering for the Maruts rather than for him. Indra asks Agastya if there is really is to be nothing for him and how can one understand how such a thing could happen (1ab)! Indra warns Agastya that he may be able to fool someone else with promises of future offerings, but he cannot deceive or deny Indra (1cd). In fear, Agastya tries to convince Indra that he should not take the offerings intended for the Maruts, since they are his warriors, but rather come to some sort of accommodation with them (2). But Indra insists and accuses Agastya of ignoring him altogether (3). Agastya quickly capitulates and orders the sacrifice to be readied for Indra (4), but he still hopes that Indra will come to an agreement with Maruts to share the offering (5).

Curious is the use of the 1st dual verb *tanavāvahai* "we two shall extend (the sacrifice)" in verse 4, for it is unclear who the second subject, besides Agastya, would be. It might perhaps be Indra, taking an active role in his own sacrifice, but we suggest rather that it is Agastya's wife Lopāmudrā, who is his ritual partner in I.179.

1. [Indra:] Now is there nothing? And tomorrow nothing? Who understands this (nothing), which is unmistakable (to me)?
   The thought of another can be bewitched and what he expected is lost.
2. [Agastya:] Are you going to strike us down, Indra? The Maruts are your brothers.
   Make a proper arrangement with them. Do not strike us down in your confrontation (with them).
3. [Indra:] If you are our companion, brother Agastya, why do you overlook us?
   For we understand what your thinking is: it is only to us that you do not wish to give.
4. [Agastya:] Let them ready the altar. Let them kindle the fire in front (of it).
   The appearance of the immortal (soma will be) there. We two shall extend the sacrifice for you.
5. You are the master of good things, o lord of goods. You are the foremost institutor of alliances, o lord of alliances.
   O Indra, come to an agreement with the Maruts, and then eat the oblations in the proper ritual order.

I.171 Maruts (1–2) and Indra and the Maruts (3–6)

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

For this hymn see the introduction to I.165. In this episode Agastya pleads with the Maruts to reconcile themselves with Indra and with him. He first addresses the Maruts (1–4) and then turns to Indra himself (5–6). In verse 4 Agastya explains to the Maruts that Indra terrified him and although the offerings were prepared for them, Agastya was forced to give them away to Indra. Then he addresses Indra and asks that Indra together with the Maruts prosper the "sons of Māna." Māna is Agastya's father, and therefore Agastya is seeking prosperity for his extended family. In verse 6 he pleads with the god not to attack the Maruts, who are his own men (6a), for ultimately Indra will be even greater because of his alliance with the Maruts (6cd).

In 5a *usrā́ḥ* "ruddy" primarily describes the dawns, but it could also modify the "sons of Māna." This ambiguity associates the luster of the dawns with the luster that Agastya wishes for his family. The ruddy color of the dawns is also the characteristic color of cattle and further suggests that the luster of the sons of Māna will be based in their wealth of cattle.

1. [Agastya:] I come before you with this, my reverence. With my hymn I beg the favor of you overpowering ones.

Through your generosity and knowing ways, o Maruts, put aside your anger! Unhitch your horses!

2. Fashioned by my heart and mind, this praise song with my reverence is set in place for you, o Maruts, o gods.
   Being pleased in mind, travel here to it, for you are those growing strong by just (such) reverence.
3. Praised, let the Maruts have mercy on us, and praised, let the generous one [=Indra] (have mercy)!—he who is the greatest good luck.
   Let our carved [?] wooden (cups) stand upright throughout all (our) days, o Maruts, in accordance with our desire to win.
4. (Then was) I retreating from this mighty one, Maruts, trembling from fear of Indra.
   These oblations (of soma) were sharpened for you, but we have sent them away. Have mercy upon us!
5. (The fame) by which the sons of Māna will shine with power during the ruddy (dawns), at the dawning of the ever-constant (dawns)—
   grant (that) fame to us, o bull!—You together with the Maruts, you the mighty one together with the mighty ones, you the enduring one giving strength.
6. O Indra, protect your men from the stronger one [=Indra]. Be one whose anger with the Maruts is appeased,
   establishing yourself as the strong one through (the Maruts) bearing their good signs. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.172 Maruts

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: gāyatrī

A brief and simple pendant to Agastya's Indra/Marut cycle. The Maruts as bringers of rain are celebrated as *sudā́nu* "having good drops" (vss. 1–3), an epithet that can also mean "having good gifts." The poet asks that the negative aspects of the thunderstorm stay far away from him and his people.

1. Bright be your course, bright with your help, o Maruts rich in drops,
   who gleam like snakes.
2. In the distance be your straight-aiming arrow, you Maruts rich in drops,
   in the distance the stone that you hurl.
3. Avoid the clans of Tr̥ṇaskanda ("Grasshopper"), you rich in drops.
   Set us upright, to live.

I.173 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
13 verses: triṣṭubh

The opening of the hymn (vss. 1–4) depicts the beginning of a sacrifice, as the priests assemble and raise the song of praise and the other features of the sacrifice take their places. The expectation of Indra's arrival and enjoyment of the sacrifice ends verse 4. The next three verses (5–7) constitute a formal praise of Indra, with a lovely image (vs. 6) of the god dressed in all the parts of the cosmos. These three verses, especially verse 7, also depict Indra as a feisty combatant whom competing forces wish to have on their side; the striking image in 7ab is of a tug-of-war. In the next verses (8–9) we redouble our efforts to secure him for our sacrifice. Verse 10 reprises the theme of Indra as the focus of competing factions, in a very dense and complex set of images, while verse 11 expresses the ritualists' belief that a properly performed sacrifice will bring Indra here, however long it takes. The meandering route of the sacrifice in that verse is replicated in form by the meandering syntax. Verse 12 is a thematic departure, as well as a return to the rivalry of Indra and the Maruts over Agastya's sacrifice; here the poet once again offers sacrifice to both parties. The hymn ends (vs. 13) with a familiar type of summary verse, with internal reference to the poem that is ending.

As a product of Agastya, this hymn poses many verbal puzzles and provides many verbal rewards.

1. He sings the sāman bursting out like (the song of) a bird; we chant this (chant) that is growing strong, bringing the sun.
   The cows, the milkers, the undeceivable ones are on the ritual grass, so that they will entice here the one whose seat is in heaven.
2. The bull chants along with the bulls whose sweat is an oblation, like a ravenous wild beast, when he would out-sing (them).
   The exuberant Hotar sings forth his zeal. The young blood, deserving the sacrifice, supports the pair (of priests).
3. The Hotar approaches, circling around the fixed seats (of the sacrificial beasts). He bears the embryo of the earth through the years.
   The horse neighs while being led; the cow bellows. Speech wanders between the two worlds like a messenger.
4. We have done these more attainable *deeds [=ritual activities] for him. Those seeking the gods carry the actions further.
   He will enjoy them—Indra of wondrous luster, coming easily like the Nāsatyas, standing upon his chariot.
5. Praise this Indra, who is the "real thing," who is a champion, who is a benefactor, standing upon his chariot.
   More combative even than his opponent, provided with bulls, he's the one who smashes apart even the enveloping darkness.
6. Since he stands out from (other) superior men in just this way by his greatness, the two worlds befit him, like belts.

Indra has enwrapped himself in the earth, like a circlet. The autonomous one wears heaven like a headdress.

7. O champion, you who are the choice of those who are in battle, you most in the vanguard, you who are to be yanked around (by the opposing sides)—
to Indra do they of one accord (direct?) their battle-cries in exhilaration, they who applaud you also as patron by reason of your victory prizes.
8. Thus, because the soma-pressings in the sea [=mixing of soma with water] are luck for you, when the waters, the goddesses, reach exhilaration among these (cows) [=mixing with milk] for you,
every cow will yield to you to be enjoyed, if you pursue the people, also the patrons, with holy fervor—
9. So that we shall be in good fellowship with him and through him possess good dominance, as if through the lauds of men—
so that Indra will be there for us, standing upon our praise, leading our hymns, like a powerful one (leading) the work [/ritual performance].
10. The contenders—(crying) "Indra with mace in hand will be *ours*!"—seeking (the one in) the middle [=Indra], try to win him over with their sacrifices,
as those seeking an ally, (approaching) a lord of strongholds in regard to his good command, (try to win him over) with lauds of men.
11. For any sacrifice that reaches fulfillment, even though it swerves along, meandering in mind,
brings Indra to the house, as if bringing a thirsting man to a ford—as a long road brings home a man who reaches his goal.
12. Don't (involve?) us here in your battles with the gods [=Maruts], o Indra. For there is propitiation for you, tempestuous one,
from the one offering oblations, whose song in its flood also extols the great Maruts, who grant rewards.
13. This praise for you, Indra, is in us. With it you will find the way to us, you of the fallow bays.
You should turn us here to good faring, o god. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.174 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

Another hymn bursting with Agastya's tricks, here especially in the realm of daring syntax and deliberate omission of key words. The hymn celebrates Indra's great deeds, especially his victories over multiple named and unnamed opponents. Allusions to

the Vṛtra myth and the release of the waters recur throughout the hymn (vss. 2, 3, 9), though the name Vṛtra is mentioned only once (vs. 2). The first verse urges Indra to "guard the gods," and he appears in that role as protector of Agni and his ritual activities (vs. 3) and enforcer of the norms of Ārya society, as embodied in the three principal Ādityas (vs. 6). Others who break the Ārya social contrast—the impious, the godless, the speakers of scorn, and the breakers of alliances (vss. 2, 6, 7, 8)—also fall victim to Indra as enforcer. Thus, though the tone is martial, the message is moral.

Two separate devices structure the hymn. On the one hand, the vocative *indra* (always to be read trisyllabically) appears in the first pāda of every verse immediately after the caesura. On the other hand, there is ring composition: the first and last (10) verses name Indra as "giver of victorious power" and "protector of men," while verse 2 has numerous echoes in verses 7–9.

1. You are king, Indra: guard those who are gods and the superior men;
   protect us, lordly one.
   You, as lord of settlements, are our surpassing benefactor, you the real
   possessor of goods and giver of victorious power.
2. You subdued the clans whose speech was scornful, Indra, when you split
   the seven autumnal strongholds, their shelter.
   You set the flooding waters in motion, faultless one. You made Vṛtra
   subject to the youth Purukutsa.
3. Drive the troops whose lord is a champion [=you], Indra, and (those
   [=Maruts?]) with whom now (you gain?) heaven, much invoked one.
   Guard insatiable Agni going in triumph; like a lion, (guard) his labors in
   the house at dawn.
4. They [=enemies] will lie now in the same womb, Indra, for the
   glorification of your metal-edged weapon in its greatness.
   When by battle he sent the floods, the cows surging downward, he
   mounted his two fallow bays; boldly he swiped the battle-prizes.
5. Convey Kutsa, Indra, in whom you take pleasure. Eager for the halter are
   the two silvery horses of the Wind.
   Then tear off the wheel of the Sun at the moment of encounter. Mace in
   hand, he will charge the opponents.
6. Once you had smashed those who rout their allies, and had smashed the
   impious when you were strengthened by the stimulant, o Indra of the
   fallow bays,
   those who saw before them Aryaman in company with these two [=Mitra
   and Varuṇa], they were shattered by you, taking their progeny along.
7. The sage poet [=Uśanā Kāvya?] murmured, o Indra, at the winning
   of the chants [/(sun's) rays]: "He has made the earth a pillow for
   the Dāsa.
   The bounteous one will make the three (worlds?) bright with drops; he
   has embedded in a woeful womb the one who speaks evil in scorn."

8. These are your old (deeds), Indra; new ones have come: you overpowered and exploded the many (strongholds) for the lack of joy [/end of battle] (of the godless).
   You split the godless (clans) into pieces, like strongholds; you bowed the weapon of the godless reviler.
9. You, the tumultuous one, Indra, set the tumultuous waters in motion, flowing like streams.
   When you will cross the sea, o champion, make Turvaśa and Yadu cross to well-being.
10. You, Indra, should be at all times our man-protector of men, who best keeps the wolf away
    and giver of victorious power over all our contenders. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.175 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except skhandogrīvī 1, triṣṭubh 6

The shorter compass of dimeter meter (vss. 1–5) seems to cramp Agastya's style somewhat. The most obvious device in this hymn is the relentless repetition of forms derived from a very few roots: *mad* "become exhilarated" (vss. 1, 2, 5), *sah* "be victorious" (vss. 2–3), *san/sā* "win" (vss. 1, 2, 3, 5). These three roots create an inescapable poetic logic of cause (exhilaration) and effect (conquer [enemies] and win [prizes]), but the effect is still rather clumsy.

Verse 4 stands out as the exception, as it contains no forms of any of the signature roots, and it compresses within it a whole mythological complex: the stealing of the wheel of the Sun, and the involvement of Kutsa, the horses of the Wind, and, by implication, Uśanā Kāvya in that obscure story—a myth also alluded to in the preceding hymn (I.174.5, 7, as well as often elsewhere, e.g., I.130.9).

One other feature is worthy of note: the image in verse 3cd, of Indra "firing" the Dasyu like a piece of pottery.

1. Become exhilarated: might has been drunk by you, like the cup's exhilarating exhilaration, you of the fallow bays.
   The bullish drop is for you the bull, the drop that is the competitor that best wins thousands.
2. Let it come here to us—your exhilarating bullish exhilaration worthy to be chosen,
   possessing victorious power, winning, victorious in battle, immortal.
3. For you are a champion, a winner; you impel the chariot of Manu.
   Possessing victorious power, you fire the Dasyu who follows no commandment, like a cup with flame.

4. Steal the wheel from the Sun, o poet, showing mastery with your strength.
   Convey Kutsa, bane for Śuṣṇa, with the horses of the Wind.
5. For most unbridled is your exhilaration and most brilliant your resolve.
   By reason of (the exhilaration?) that smashes Vṛtra and (the resolve?) that finds wide space, might you be thought the best winner of horses.
6. Just as for the previous singers, Indra, you became like joy, like waters for the thirsty,
   (so) I keep invoking you according to the formal invocation [/nivid].
   – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.176 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

Though also in dimeter meter, this hymn displays an exuberance that the previous one (I.175) lacks. Both hymns begin with the same imperative (*mátsi* "become exhilarated") and end with the same verse (6), but in this hymn the soma drop is generally the addressee, urged to mastermind Indra's great actions, and especially to help Indra destroy his, and our, enemies. The language is lively and the images unclichéd; note for example verse 2cd, where the scattering of power is likened to the sowing of seed in furrows just plowed by a bull.

1. Become exhilarated, to seek betterment for us. O drop, as bull, enter Indra.
   Showing your mettle, you drive the rival; you do not find a rival facing (you).
2. Make the hymns enter into him, who is sole (king) of the domains,
   following whom autonomous power is strewn, like grain whenever a bull is plowing,
3. In whose hands are all the goods of the five settlements.
   Cause our deceiver to be spied out. Like a heavenly missile, smash him.
4. Smash anyone who doesn't press soma, anyone difficult to get at who is no joy to you.
   Give his possessions to us, even though he will laud himself as a patron.
5. You aided (him,) the doubly exalted (Indra), so that the ridge-frequenter [=soma] will be his at the chants.
   In the contest, o drop, you helped Indra's prize-seeker to the prizes.
6. Just as for the previous singers, Indra, you became like joy, like waters for the thirsty,
   (so) I keep invoking you according to the formal invocation [/nivid].
   – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.177 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Bloomfield (1916: 155) remarks of this hymn, "[It] is certainly late clap-trap. The jingly use of stems vṛ́ṣan and vṛṣabhá furnishes its main claim to attention. All its repeated pādas are suspect." Although we moderns might tend to be less outspoken, this is certainly one of Agastya's lesser efforts. The standard tropes of invitation to the sacrifice (vs. 1ab), journey (vss. 1cd–3), and arrival (vs. 4) are presented without complexity, and with a certain recycling of vocabulary—not only the "bull" words scornfully noted by Bloomfield, but also "right up here" (*arvā́ṅ* vss. 1, 2, 5), "one such as me" (*madrík* vss. 1, 3), and the usual lexicon of the journey. The only really notable feature of the hymn is the first half verse, which uses a number of different terms to situate Indra in relation to the human populations, while implicitly asking him to choose us as his destination among these populations.

1. Here (let) the bull of the peoples, filling the domains, the king of the communities, much-invoked Indra (come).
   Praised, seeking fame, having hitched up the two bullish fallow bays, drive right up to one such as me with help.
2. Your bullish bulls, Indra, which are yoked by sacred formulations, the steeds provided with a bullish chariot—
   mount them; with them drive right up here. We invoke you, Indra, when the soma is pressed.
3. Mount the bullish chariot. The bullish soma is pressed for you, the honeyed drinks poured forth.
   Having hitched up, with the two bulls, o bull of the settlements, with the two fallow bays, drive on an easy slope up to one such as me.
4. Here is the sacrifice, proceeding to the gods; here is the ritual meal, here the sacred formulations, here the soma, Indra.
   The ritual grass is strewn. Drive forth toward it here, able one. Drink, having sat down on it. Unharness your two fallow bays here.
5. Well-praised, drive right here, Indra, up to the sacred formulations of the bard of Māna's lineage.
   May we know through your aid, as we sing at dawn… – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.178 Indra

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

One might fancifully suggest that all the difficulties that were stripped out of the immediately preceding hymn (I.177) to produce that elementary composition have

been piled into this one, which has a number of intractable problems in grammar (see especially the plural verb with apparent dual subject in verse 2b) and interpretation. Nonetheless, the overall intent of the hymn is clear.

In the first two verses the poet asserts the usual relationship between mortal praise and divine aid. Indra gives his attention to the current poet as he did to previous ones, it is hoped, and therefore should fulfill our desire. The content of this desire is expressed in an obscure phrase, "all things around the waters of Āyu," which has been explained by Paul Thieme (1949: 41 n. 2) as the territories that can be inhabited by men because water is available. Verse 2 more or less repeats the sentiments: Indra will surely not deprive us, and he will surely come to our sacrifice. The question is *what* Indra will not deprive us of: the grammatical difficulties of pāda b alluded to above add to the interpretational puzzle. If the two sisters here are Night and Dawn, as most scholars believe, it is presumably whatever these two temporal entities (treated as plural, not dual, because they consist of many days and nights?) produce in the progress of time. The sisters could also be the two hands (treated as plural because each consists of five fingers). The waters make another appearance in this verse, with no more clarity than in verse 1.

The next verse (3), which is the center of the hymn, predicates of Indra (in agent nouns difficult to render literally) an array of roles in which he gives aid to mortals, and the final two verses (4–5), beginning with a summary *evā́* "even so, in the same way," urge Indra to fulfill some of these roles.

1. Since, Indra, the same attentive hearing of yours still exists by reason of which you stood by the (previous) singers with your help,
   don't let our wish that magnifies (you) come up short. Might I attain all things of yours (that are) around the waters of Āyu.
2. King Indra will not cheat us (of those things) that the two sisters [=Dawn and Night? hands?] will make in their own womb.
   The easily goaded waters also toiled for him. Indra will come to our fellowship and vitality.
3. Indra, champion in battles, is the one who conquers with his superior men, the one who hears the call of the bard crying in distress,
   the one who brings the chariot of the pious man to the fore (when he is) nearby, and the one who raises up the songs, if he is there in person.
4. Even so, (let) Indra with his superior men, with a desire for good fame, the devourer of strengthening nourishment, overcome the allies.
   He will be praised in the competition for refreshment and at the debate—as the one active in every way, as the (very) laud of the sacrificer.
5. With you, bounteous Indra, may we overcome our rivals who think themselves mighty.
   You be our rescuer and be for our strengthening. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.179 Agastya and Lopāmudrā [Anukramaṇī: Rati "Delight"]

Lopāmudrā 1–2, Agastya 3–4, student 5–6 (so the Anukramaṇī)
6 verses: triṣṭubh, except br̥hatī 5

This justly famous and memorable hymn compresses much matter in a few verses. The first four verses consist of a dialogue between the seer Agastya, the poet of this hymn cycle (I.165–191), and his wife Lopāmudrā. It concerns, and contains in embryo, a persistent theme in Indian religious literature and thought, the competing and incompatible goals of male religious figures: ascetic practice and the production of sons, and it also presents the figure who mediates these goals: the sexually eager woman who seduces the ascetic, who can thus attain the second goal without actively abandoning the first (see, e.g., Jamison 1996a: 15–17).

Lopāmudrā speaks the first two verses, urging her husband to allow them both to cease their ritual labors and have sex. She mentions the deleterious effects of old age (vs. 1c) and cites as a precedent for her proposed course of action the pious ancients who nevertheless also stopped working from time to time (vs. 2). In our view (and that of the Anukramaṇī and Sāyaṇa, inter alia, contra a number of modern scholars, who assign vs. 4 to Lopāmudrā), Agastya speaks the next two verses (3–4). In verse 3 he counters her proposal with a vigorous call to renewed religious endeavor, which he casts as a battle against a tricky and numerous enemy that they, as a married couple (*mithunaú*), can defeat together. The word *mithunaú* is a charged one, because it of course can refer specifically to a *sexual* pairing. And this is what appears to be rather graphically illustrated in verse 4, where Agastya succumbs to his lust, as Lopāmudrā engages him in intercourse. The "steadfast" (*dhī́ra*) man is undone by the "flighty" (*ádhīra*) woman.

The next two verses (5–6) are assigned by the Anukramaṇī to a student, and at least verse 5 may contain the expiatory statement of someone, quite possibly a *brahmacārin* or Vedic student, who has broken a vow, quite possibly the vow of chastity, and has undertaken ritual purification. The myth embodied in the previous dialogue acts as a Legendenzauber, a magic spell that provides a mythological precedent for the misdeed and its expiation. (See Thieme 1964: 76.) The final verse (6) summarizes the happy results for Agastya, despite—indeed because of—his lapse: he attained offspring as well as power and a place among the gods.

Although verse 5 provides support for the expiatory theory, we are inclined to think there is something more going on, and that the conflict between Agastya and Lopāmudrā reflects a theological struggle dimly perceptible beneath the surface of the late R̥gveda—the struggle between the innovative theologians who favor introducing the new ritual model involving the Sacrificer's Wife as partner on the ritual stage, and the conservatives who consider it a dangerous model with potentially disastrous side-effects. Agastya in verse 3 appears to be a spokesman for the innovators, urging an energetic ritual partnership between husband and wife—a

partnership that deteriorates in the next verse into a mere sexual encounter. In this reading Agastya must undertake the penance in verse 5, and although everything comes out right for him, the hymn cannot be seen as a ringing endorsement of the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife.

1. [Lopāmudrā:] "For many autumns have I been laboring, evening and morning, through the aging dawns.
   Old age diminishes the beauty of bodies. Bullish (men) should now come to their wives."
2. [Lopāmudrā:] "For even those ancients, who served truth and at one with the gods spoke truths,
   even they got out of harness, for they did not reach the end. Wives should now unite with their bullish (husbands)."
3. [Agastya:] "Not in vain is the labor that the gods help. Let us two take on all contenders;
   let us two win here the contest of a hundred stratagems, when as a united couple we will drive on."
4. [Agastya:] "The lust of a mounting bull [/waxing reed = penis] has come to me, lust arisen from here, from there, from everywhere.
   Lopāmudrā makes the bullish one flow out; the steadfast man does the flighty woman suck while he is snorting."
5. [Student or Agastya:] "This soma within my heart, just drunk, do I adjure:
   Whatever offense we have committed, let him forgive that, for of many desires is mortal man."
6. Agastya, digging with spades, seeking offspring, descendants, power—
   with regard to both "colors" [=offspring and ascetic power] the mighty seer throve. He arrived at his hopes, which came true among the gods.

I.180 Aśvins

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

Agastya's trickery and virtuosic obscurity are fully on display in this hymn. As a consequence we are uncertain about the correctness of many details of our interpretation, but puzzling out the hymn provides an exhilarating ride—perhaps appropriately, since the hymn begins and ends with the Aśvins' chariot-drive around the cosmic spaces. This ring composition is signaled by the responsions between verses 1 and 10: the chariot "flies around" the airy realms and the (cosmic) floods in 1ab and "speeds around" heaven in 10c (a parallel with a clever twist in the Sanskrit, where the verb "flies" [*dī́yat*] is a close phonological match with the

word for "heaven" [*dyā́m*]), and a physical feature of the chariot, its wheel-rims or fellies, is mentioned in both verses, but with different words (*paví* 1c, *-nemi* 10c). This ring composition provides a structure in which both the Aśvins' journey to and participation in the sacrifice and the poet's exploration of the boundaries of language can be anchored.

In our view the flying journey begun in verse 1 brings the Aśvins to the sacrificial ground and its ritual fire in verse 2, a fire that is itself characterized as having "wide flight," that is, as physically spreading out and up when kindled. The next two verses depict several of the Aśvins' earlier deeds as creating a reciprocal benefit for them at the current sacrifice. Verse 3 notes that they (primordially) put the milk in cows, a fact of nature that is often marveled at in the R̥gveda—that a "cooked" (that is, ready to consume) substance, milk, is derived from its container, the "raw" flesh of the living cow. Now this same milk is going into cups to provide the Aśvins' oblation. Similarly, in verse 4 the sweet gharma drink that they produced for the mythological figure Atri comes back to them at this sacrifice. Both of these verses, particularly 3, bristle with difficulties.

With verse 5 the poet turns to his own situation and, in subsequent verses, that of his fellow singers and their patrons. In 5 he presents himself, in the 1st person singular, as a poor man beset with difficulties, expressing the hope that with his praise he can bring the Aśvins to his sacrifice and induce them to make gifts. Verse 6 has as its subject the poet's patron, depicted in two punning verbs (6c) as actively involved in the sacrifice; the poet here (6d) hopes that this patron will act in good faith and according to his proper duty by receiving the Aśvins' gifts and then redistributing them to the poet and his fellows. Verses 7 and 8 present a series of interlocking causal clauses with shifting subjects. In 7ab because "we singers" do our job of praising the gods, our patron is not stingy. "We singers" (of 7ab) in the 1st person plural transform into Agastya in the 3rd person singular (8cd) via a set of clauses in which the human half of the divine/human interface is left unspecified, and indeed other crucial grammatical information, like the verb in 8ab, is missing. In our interpretation, Agastya, who is of course the poet (who appeared in the 1st person singular in vs. 5), is the subject of the whole of verse 8, and he is calling the Aśvins to the Morning Pressing, the sacrifice appropriate to them, whose ritual substance, the soma, is characterized by the difficult hapax *vírudra* "apart from/without Rudra/the Rudras [=Maruts]." We believe (after a suggestion of Geldner's) that this word encodes a reference to Agastya's mythological engagement with the Maruts (see especially the dialogue hymns I.165, 170, 171) and his attempts to ensure that the Maruts get a share in the sacrifice. Here, since the Maruts are associated with the Midday Pressing, the offering of soma to the Aśvins in the early morning would be made without the Maruts, despite Agastya's loyalty to the Maruts and his general eagerness to provide them offerings. In any case, clearly Agastya has had ritual success, crowned both by widespread praise (8c) and by the possession of thousands (presumably of cows or other livestock).

Verses 9–10 return to the gods' chariot journey and are relatively straightforward, with a particularly uncomplicated demand for horses for us and our patrons in 9cd.

1. Your easily controlled horses (fly around) the airy realms, when your chariot flies around the floods.
   Your golden wheel-rims spray (honey); drinking of the honey you accompany the dawns.
2. You descend to the movement of the steed of wide flight [=ritual fire], the one belonging to men, foremost at the sacrifice,
   when your sister [=Dawn] will bring you, o you welcomed by all, and (the singer) solemnly invokes you for victory's prize and for refreshment, o honey-drinkers.
3. You set milk in the ruddy (cow)—the cooked in the raw—(set) down the cow's primordial (substance),
   which (milk) is (now) going within the wooden (cups) for you, as a blazing twisting (snake [=fire]) goes among the trees, o you whose breath is truth. The one with the oblation is performing sacrifice.
4. You chose the honeyed hot drink for Atri, to send it here like a surge of water.
   Now (the refreshing drinks) of honey come back to you, like chariot wheels on the quest for livestock, o Aśvins, superior men.
5. With a laud might I turn you here for the giving of a cow, as the time-worn son of Tugra did, o wondrous ones—
   a great roar (as if) of water accompanies you two great ones—(might I,) worn out from anxiety and without cattle, (turn) you (here), o you who are worthy of the sacrifice.
6. When you team up your teams, o you of good gifts, you send abundance nearby by your own autonomous powers.
   Our patron gives the ritual prompt [/will please]; he toils [/will pursue] like the wind. Like one who well follows his commandments, he has taken victory's prize, in order (to show) great (generosity?).
7. Since we, your trusty singers, are expressing our admiration for you, the niggard with his hoard is far away.
   And since, o Aśvins, (you are) irreproachable, because you protect (the man) who has the gods nearby, o bulls,
8. And since (Agastya summons) you, o Aśvins, through the days at the winning of the first outpouring of (soma, offered) apart from the Rudras [=Maruts],
   Agastya, proclaimed of men among men as if with a tumult of praise songs [?], is conspicuous by his thousands (of cows).
9. When by the greatness of your chariot you carry yourselves forward, you drive forth like the Hotar [=Agni] of Manu, o streaming ones.

Provide an abundance of good horses to our patrons and (to us): might we be companions of wealth, o Nāsatyas.

10. Today, o Aśvins, we would call your chariot here with praise songs for ever newer good faring—
(the chariot) that speeds around heaven with undamaged fellies. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.181 Aśvins

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
9 verses: triṣṭubh

Although not at the same degree of difficulty as Agastya's immediately preceding hymn to the Aśvins, this one certainly has its share of puzzles—though, as so often, it restricts itself almost entirely to the Aśvins' journey to the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself. The hymn begins at the sacrifice, with the Aśvins acting as priests (vs. 1), but then draws back temporally to the usual invitation to travel to the sacrifice (vss. 2–3). Verse 4 gives us a tantalizing glimpse of a potential differentiation between the two Aśvins, who are otherwise almost always treated as identical and identically functioning twins.

Verses 5–6 are entirely parallel to each other in structure and return to the journey theme, but introduce another, though unnamed, figure by way of a slippery use of the word *anyá* "other." In verse 4 paired *anyá*'s referred to the two individual Aśvins, but in the following two verses, each containing an *anyá* in pāda c, the Aśvins are jointly established in the first half of the verse and implicitly contrast with the unidentified "other" of pāda c. In our opinion this "other" must be Indra, identifiable because of the pair of fallow bay horses in 5c, a pair of horses that are uniquely Indra's in the Ṛgveda. It is not surprising that the Aśvins and Indra should be journeying at the same time, since both are recipients of parts of the Morning Pressing.

The final verses (7–9) take place on the sacrificial ground. Verse 8 is especially rich in striking images of the ritual: the sacrificial fire is depicted as a "gleaming wasp" whose sound is likened to a praise hymn, and the imminent mixing of soma and milk gives rise to a complex erotic image, with the soma a swollen "bullish cloud" at the "pouring out" (*séka*) of the milk—its swelling attributed to its sexual excitement at the "insemination" (*séka*) of the cow. In general, swelling as a sign of abundance is a consistent theme in the latter part of the hymn (vss. 5c, 6c, 8b, 8c).

1. What (portion) of nourishments and riches (do) you two dearest ones (draw up), when, acting as Adhvaryus, you draw up (a portion) of the waters?
This sacrifice here has made its own encomium for you, o you depositories of goods, helpers of the peoples.

2. Your blazing, milk-drinking horses, the heavenly steeds whose speed is the wind's,
   the mind-swift, straight-backed bulls—let (those) self-ruling [/self-directing] ones convey you Aśvins here.
3. Your chariot with its glossy chariot-box should come here like a forward-coursing stream, for good faring—
   (the chariot) that is worthy of the sacrifice and swifter than mind, (saying) "I am in front," o you mounters of the bull [=chariot], you holy ones.
4. Born (one) here, (one) there, the two have always bellowed together with (one) flawless body but with their own (multiple) names.
   One of you is lauded as the victorious patron of the good battler, the other as the son of heaven dispensing a good portion.
5. The attentive lead (horse) of you two, your sorrel, should go forth, following your will, to the (sacrificial) seats,
   (as should) the two fallow bays of the other [=Indra]. They will become swollen with prizes—the skittish (horses) as they (go) through the airy realms with their cries, o Aśvins.
6. Like a bull setting out to conquer, your (lead horse) of (many) autumns, dispatching many refreshing drinks of honey, goes forth
   along the routes of the other [=Indra]. (The horses) will become swollen with prizes; (like) high, roiling rivers they have come to us.
7. A substantial song has been sent surging to you, flowing in three parts to the plumped-up (ritual grass?), o ritual experts, Aśvins.
   When you are approached with praise, help the man in need; whether on your journey or not, hear my summons.
8. And this very song of the gleaming wasp [=sacrificial fire] swells in the seat of men, which has three layers of ritual grass.
   O bulls, the bullish cloud [=soma] is swollen as if at the insemination of a cow [/at the pouring out of the cow (=milk)], showing favor to the sons of Manu.
9. Just as Pūṣan and Plenitude (summoned) you, o Aśvins—the one with the oblation sings (to you, as if) to Agni, as if to Dawn,
   when I summon you, singing to you, with a longing for wide space.
   – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.182 Aśvins

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 6, 8

The hymn begins (vs. 1) by addressing the ritual participants (in the plural) and announcing the Aśvins to them; the poet then addresses the Aśvins themselves with

extravagant praise (vs. 2), but in the next verse (3) he expresses some impatience with them: why are the gods wasting their time with a non-sacrificer? They should destroy such people and reward us, the faithful sacrificers and poets (vss. 3–4). The "baying hounds" of verse 4 may well be a reference to rival poets.

Most of the remainder of the hymn (vss. 5–7) is devoted to the tale of Bhujyu, son of Tugra, whom the Aśvins rescued with a marvelous boat (or boats) when he was set adrift in the sea. This exploit was alluded to briefly by Agastya in I.180.5 and is treated several times in Kakṣīvant's Aśvin hymns (esp. I.116.3–5, I.117.14–15) as well as elsewhere in the Ṛgveda.

The final verse (8) is a typical summary verse, referring to the poem just recited and ending with the Agastya refrain.

1. This (ritual) pattern has now been set: (all of you,) attend upon it!
 The chariot has its bulls: become exhilarated, (all) you of inspired thought!
 (Here are) the two holy ones who quicken thought, who provided the goods to (the mare) Viśpalā, the sons of heaven whose commandments are bright for the good performer (of ritual).
2. Because you holy ones are the first of Indras and the first of Maruts, the most wondrous wondrous ones and the best chariot-driving chariot drivers,
 you bring your full chariot loaded with honey. With it you drive right up to the pious man, o Aśvins.
3. What are you doing here, wondrous ones; why are you sitting (by) some man, who, though offering no oblations, makes a great show of himself.
 Pass him by; wear away the life of the niggard. Make light for the eloquent inspired poet.
4. Crush the baying hounds on every side; smash the scornful. You know how (to do) these things, o Aśvins.
 Make every speech of the singer adorned with treasure. Both of you, o Nāsatyas—help my laud.
5. For Tugra's son (Bhujyu) in the rivers you made the boat, with a body [=cockpit?] and wings [=sails?],
 with which you carried him out with (your?) mind directed toward the gods. With good flight you flew out of the great surge.
6. The son of Tugra, thrust down within the waters, thrust forth into darkness that offered nothing to grab onto—
 the four welcome boats of paunchy (shape?), sent by the Aśvins, deliver him up to safety.
7. What tree emerged in the midst of the flood to which the son of Tugra clung in his distress,
 to grab hold of its leaves as if to the feathers of a wild bird in flight? You carried him up, o Aśvins, for (his story) to be heard.

8. O Nāsatyas, superior men, it should stay by you—the solemn speech that the sons of Māna have spoken for you
today from this seat belonging to soma. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.183 Aśvins

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

A simple and straightforward hymn, especially in comparison with the first two of Agastya's Aśvin hymns (I.180–181), almost entirely concerned with the Aśvins' chariot and their journey to the sacrifice. In this hymn they travel with Dawn (vs. 2). The dangers of the journey and their possible neglect of us are briefly touched on (vs. 4ab), but with little anxiety, before the offerings are announced to them.

1. Harness that which is swifter than mind, which has a triple chariot-box and three wheels, o bulls,
with which you drive right up to the dwelling of the good performer (of rituals). You fly with the tripartite (chariot) like a bird with its feathers.
2. The smooth-rolling chariot rolls on as it goes toward earth, when you stand on it, resolved to fortify (us).
Let this hymn here accompany the wonder with wonderment; you keep company with Dawn, the Daughter of Heaven.
3. Mount your smooth-rolling chariot, the one providing the oblations that rolls on according to your commandments,
by which you two, o Nāsatyas, superior men, drive your circuit for our descendants and ourselves to prosper.
4. Let neither the wolf nor the she-wolf venture against you. Do not avoid (us) nor pass (us) by.
Here is the portion deposited for you, here the hymn, o wondrous ones, and here the deposits of honey for you.
5. Gotama, Purumīḍha, Atri—(each one), providing the oblations, summons you two for help, o wondrous ones.
Like those going in a straight line to the directed direction, drive here to my summons, o Nāsatyas.
6. We have crossed to the further shore of this darkness. A praise hymn has been set out in response to you, o Aśvins.
Drive just here along the paths leading to the gods. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.184 Aśvins

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This last hymn in Agastya's series to the Aśvins is a symmetrically shaped five-verse composition, since the final verse (6) is simply repeated from the previous hymn (183.6). The first two verses call the gods to the sacrifice and urge them to enjoy the sacrifice and be attentive to the poet. Verses 4–5 return to the scene of the sacrifice, requesting that the gifts and attention of the Aśvins be directed to us, not to others (vs. 4), while verse 5 contains a common type of summary of the hymn in which it's found, announcing its completion (5ab), and ends with the Aśvins in the company of Agastya (5d). The poet's positioning of his own name directly adjacent to that of the Aśvins (voc. Nāsatya) in the final pāda of this series was surely deliberate.

The middle verse (3) makes a brief detour into mythology: the participation of the Aśvins in the bridal journey of Sūryā, Daughter of the Sun (5ab). The verse is addressed, in the first instance, to Pūṣan, who also participates in this episode elsewhere. Several obscure images are found in this verse—the simile comparing the Aśvins to arrow-makers (3a) and the journey of their lead horses (3cd) with the well-nigh-impenetrable simile involving "vast Varuṇa," which may refer to the sea and reflect the generally later association of Varuṇa with waters. These difficulties are, of course, appropriate to a structurally isolated middle verse.

1. We would summon you today and you later on. When dawn is breaking,
   the conductor (of words) with solemn words (summons)
   the Nāsatyas, the sons of Heaven, wherever they are, for the man who
   gives even more than the stranger.
2. Bring yourselves to exhilaration in our company, o bulls! Beat up the
   niggards when you are exhilarated by the wave (of soma).
   Listen to me, you superior men, brought here through sacrifice by the
   invitations of my thoughts, and (be) attentive with your ears.
3. O Pūṣan, the two gods, the Nāsatyas, as if making arrows ready for glory,
   (made ready) the bridal procession of Sūryā.
   Your lead horses, born in the waters, zig-zag along the wagon-treks as if
   over the worn (surfaces) of the vast Varuṇa [=the sea?].
4. Let your (honeyed) gift be for us, honeyed ones. Spur on the praise song
   of the bard, the son of Māna,
   when the separate peoples applaud your (deeds) worthy of fame, in order
   to (attain) an abundance of good heroes, o you of good gifts.
5. This praise song with a good twist has been made for you by the sons of
   Māna, o bounteous Aśvins.
   Drive your circuit for the sake of our descendants and ourselves,
   becoming exhilarated in company with Agastya, o Nāsatyas.

6. We have crossed to the further shore of this darkness. A praise hymn has been set out in response to you, o Aśvins.
   Drive just here along the paths leading to the gods. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.185 Heaven and Earth

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This eleven-verse hymn falls into two connected sections. Verses 2–8 all end with a pāda-long refrain; since this refrain seems to be an implicit response to verse 1, we believe that 1–8 form a coherent whole, ending with an expiatory verse (8) and then followed by a three-verse summary referring to the hymn-within-a-hymn that precedes.

The refrain addressed to Heaven and Earth, "protect us from the formless void," expresses the Vedic fear of the darkness and lack of definition characteristic of pre-creation chaos. Heaven and Earth help dispel that fear and provide protection from the void in several ways. They are the defining structures of the cosmos, and within the shaped space they produce between them, all separate forms, animate and inanimate, exist. This seems to be the point of verse 1c, "they carry everything that is a name"; we take this as a version of the later Sanskrit *nāma-rūpa* "name and form," the multiplicity of individual entities, defined by the conjunction of a physical form and a word for it. Heaven and Earth are also the parents of the Sun, the light that allows the individual forms to be seen. Their parentage of the Sun is, in our opinion, the subject of verses 2–4, though the Sun is not mentioned directly. The embryo of verse 2 is the "gift of Aditi" in verse 3 (the Sun is already called *ādityá*, son of Aditi in the late Ṛgveda; see, e.g., I.191.9), while verse 4 describes the wonder that Heaven and Earth are never burned by the Sun, their son. (On this kinship relation, see also the Heaven and Earth hymn I.160.)

Heaven and Earth define space, but they also, in part via their son, define time: the regular alternation of day and night is first mentioned in verse 1d. The two complementary pairs, Heaven and Earth and Night and Dawn, are treated together in verse 4c, and in our opinion the siblings of verse 5 are more likely Night and Dawn than Heaven and Earth, since they are located "in the lap of their parents," that is, Heaven and Earth. However, the latter pair are definitely the subject of verses 6–7, and their role in conception is highlighted again. The final verse of the refrain-bounded section (8) seeks expiation for an unnamed offense, and offers the current hymn ("this hymnic vision") to that end.

The last three verses (9–11) develop this theme. The poet expresses the hope that the verbal products he has just produced will help him: his "lauds belonging

to men" (a variation on the technical term *nárāśáṃsa*, vs. 9), and the "truth" he addressed to Heaven and Earth (vss. 10–11).

1. Which of these two is the earlier, and which the later? How were they born, o poets? Who fully understands?
   By themselves the two carry everything that is a name. Day and Night roll through (them) like two wheels.
2. The two, unmoving and footless, conceive an ample embryo, moving and footed,
   like a natural son in the lap of his parents. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
3. I invoke the gift of Aditi, which is without fault, without aggression, without weapon, and provided with sunlight and reverence.
   O you two world-halves, beget it for the singer. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
4. We should be devoted to the two who are never scorched, (always) giving help with their help, to the two world-halves whose children are the gods,
   to the pair among the gods, along with the pairs among the days. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
5. The two young women, sisters, siblings [=Night and Dawn?], contiguous and uniting with each other in the lap of their parents,
   sniff-kissing the navel of the world. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
6. The two broad and lofty seats do I invoke with truth, the begetters of the gods with their help,
   they of lovely countenance who conceive the immortal one. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
7. The two, broad and wide, voluminous and of distant boundary, do I address with homage in this sacrifice,
   who, bringing good fortune and advancing well, conceive (the embryo). – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.
8. If we have ever committed any offence at all against the gods or against a comrade or against the lord of the family,
   this hymnic vision should be propitiation to them. – O Heaven and Earth, protect us from the formless void.

9. Let both lauds belonging to men help me; let both (Heaven and Earth) accompany me with aid, with help.
   There is much for him who gives even more than the stranger. Becoming exhilarated by the refreshment, might we be refreshed, o gods.
10. I of good wisdom have spoken this truth to Heaven and to Earth to hear first.
   Let the two of them protect from disgrace and difficulty in close quarters. Let the mother and father guard (us) with their help.

11. Let this come true, Heaven and Earth, which I address to you two, o Father and Mother.
 Become the nearest of the gods with your help. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.186 All Gods

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Although this hymn provides numerous small difficulties and twists of phrase characteristic of Agastya, its basic outline is very simple: god after god is urged to come to our sacrifice, beginning with Savitar (vs. 1) and ending with the gods collectively (vs. 10d), and working through a list of divinities both major (e.g., the Ādityas [vs. 2], Indra [vss. 6cd–7], the Maruts [vss. 8–9]) and minor (e.g., Ahi Budhnya [vs. 5]), in no apparent order. There is much emphasis on shared activity, with expressions like "in concert" (*sajóṣas* vss. 2–3, 6), "along with" (*smát* vss. 6–8), "like-minded" (*sámanas* vs. 8). The invitations end with verse 10; as so often, the final verse (11) is an internal reference to the hymn itself and its power to satisfy the gods.

The beginnings of the verses and half-verses display an intricate pattern of repetition that cannot be rendered in translation: with matching preverbs in verses 1–2 and 9–10 (the latter showing an especially complex phonological pattern), and the verses of the middle section (5–8) all opening with *utá* "and" (as well as additional matching material). The "and" especially contributes to our sense of the additive quality of the invitations to the gods.

1. Let god Savitar, who belongs to all men, come to us here at the rite with ritual refreshments and a good laud,
 so that you, o youths [=gods], will reach exhilaration nearby us—(let) inspired thought (come) to the whole moving world at the evening mealtime.
2. Let all the gods together come here to us: Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa in concert,
 so that they all will become our strengtheners and will make (all things) easy to overcome, like faltering power.
3. I will sing for you to the dearest guest, to Agni, with my lauds, I who prevail in concert with (him?),
 so that our good praise will be Varuṇa. And he [=Agni] will deliver refreshments like a patron praised by a stranger.
4. With a desire for gain I hasten for you with homage to Dawn and Night, (who are) like a cow that is easily milked,
 as in one and the same day I measure out my chant in milk of dissimilar forms (though found) in the same udder.

5. And let Ahi Budhnya create joy for us. As a (cow) swelling (with milk) pursues her young, the River pursues (the hymn?)
with which we will speed the Child of the Waters, whom the bulls having the speed of thought convey.
6. And let Tvaṣṭar come right here to us, in concert with the patrons, at the evening mealtime.
Indra, the Vr̥tra-smasher, who fills the domains, the most powerful of men, should come here to us.
7. And our horse-yoked thoughts lick him like cows their tender young.
Our songs approach him, the sweetest smelling of men, like wedded wives.
8. And let the like-minded Maruts along with Rodasī sit here for us—their weapons grown strong,
their horses dappled, their chariots like streams—the gods who care for the stranger, like yokemates in alliance.
9. Now that they have become conspicuous in their greatness, they hitch up their advance teams with a well-twisted (hymn),
then, when, like a (lightning) bolt on a clear day, their weapons spray all the salt-land.
10. Bring the Aśvins forward to help; bring Pūṣan forward, for they are powerful by nature,
(as are) Viṣṇu without hatred, the Wind, and the Master of the R̥bhus.
I would turn the gods here for their good favor.
11. Here among us is this visionary hymn, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice; it should provide you your fill and a place to sit—
(the hymn) that, seeking goods, takes its place among the gods. – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.187 Praise of Food (Annastuti)

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: anuṣṭubgarbha 1, gāyatrī 2, 4, 8–10, anuṣṭubh 3, 5–7, anuṣṭubh or br̥hatī 11

On the surface a charming address to food, couched throughout in the 2nd person, this hymn nonetheless enfolds some mysteries. In the straightforward verses (esp. 1–3, 6), the poet praises food as the necessary support and help for both gods and men, a theme summarized in the final verse (11).

But the nature of food and of its "juices" (*rásāḥ*) is also explored in several obscure verses (esp. 4–5), where they have a cosmic dimension. In our view, the juices of verse 4, "dispersed throughout the (cosmic) realms and adjoined to heaven like the winds," are the rains, localized in the midspace like the winds—and more generally the endlessly circulating cosmic waters that fall as rain, produce *food* in

the form of plants and animals, and return to heaven by evaporation and by ritual offering. In verse 5 these juices both yield food (as the nurturing rains) and are part of, or belong to, food (as the juicy parts of plants and animals).

The hymn takes a ritual turn in the last four verses (7–10) before the summary verse (11). Verse 7 seems to introduce the early-morning ritual; in the next three verses (8–10), marked by a refrain, food is sacralized—made equivalent to soma (vs. 9) and to a plant, perhaps the soma plant (vs. 10), each addressed as "friend of the winds" (see vs. 4 for food's association with the winds)—and transformed into ritual offerings. The generic "waters and plants" of verse 8 become the milk and grain mixed with soma in verse 9. (The exact application of vs. 10 is unfortunately unclear.) In each case, the addressee is urged to "become just the fat," in other words (in a more robust society than ours) the choicest part of the food substance.

1. Now I shall praise food, the support and power of the great,
   by whose might Trita shook Vr̥tra apart till his joints were parted.
2. O sweet food, honeyed food, we have chosen you:
   for us be a helper.
3. Draw near to us, food—kindly with your kindly help,
   joy itself, not to be despised, a very kind companion without duplicity.
4. These juices of yours, food, are dispersed throughout the realms,
   adjoined to heaven like the winds.
5. These (juices) are those that yield you, o food, and they also are part of you, sweetest food.
   Those who receive the sweetness of your juices press forward like strong-necked (bulls).
6. On you, food, is the mind of the great gods set.
   A dear (deed) was done at your signal: he smashed the serpent with your help.
7. When yonder dawning light of the mountains has come, o food,
   then you should also come here to us, honeyed food, fit for our portion.
8. When we bite off a full share of the waters and plants,
   o you friend of the winds—become just the fat.
9. When we take a share of you when mixed with milk or mixed with grain, o Soma,
   o you friend of the winds—become just the fat.
10. Become the gruel, o plant, the fat, the steaming [?] suet [?],
    o you friend of the winds—become just the fat.
11. We have sweetened you with words, o food, as cows [=milk] (do) the oblations—
    you as feasting companion for the gods, you as feasting companion for us.

I.188 Āprī

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: gāyatrī

Like the other nine Āprī hymns in the R̥gveda, this one treats a set series of sacrificial elements in a set order, using the same key words, italicized in translation. It is not as bare-bones as some examples of the genre (such as I.14, the first in the text), and phraseologically it closely resembles X.110.

1. *Kindled* today you rule as a god with the gods, o conqueror of thousands.
   As messenger and poet, convey the oblations.
2. O *Tanūnapāt*, for the one following truth the sacrifice is anointed with honey,
   while providing refreshments in thousands.
3. Being libated, as the one *to be solemnly invoked*, convey to us the gods worthy of the sacrifice.
   O Agni, you are the winner of thousands.
4. With their power they strewed the *ritual grass*, which brings a thousand heroes, toward the east,
   where, o Ādityas, you rule widely.
5. Wide-ruler and Complete-ruler, wide-ranging and preeminent, those which are many and many more—
   the *Doors* flowed ghee.
6. Because, having lovely ornaments and lovely adornments, the two rule [/shine] widely with splendor,
   let *Dawn (and Night)* take their seats here.
7. Because they are the two foremost *Divine Hotars*, poets possessing lovely speech,
   let them perform this sacrifice of ours.
8. O *Bhāratī, Iḍā,* and *Sarasvatī*—all of you whom I implore—
   spur us on to splendor.
9. Because preeminent *Tvaṣṭar* anointed all the beasts (with) their forms,
   by sacrifice win their fat for us.
10. By yourself send (the sacrificial animal) to the fold of the gods, o *Lord of the Forest*.
    Agni will sweeten the oblations.
11. Agni, the leader of the gods, is anointed by the gāyatrī-chant.
    He shines at the *svāhā-calls*.

I.189 Agni

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Although this hymn begins with a hope for an easy journey to wealth, it is clear that the poet sees menace everywhere, from which he begs Agni for protection. The imaginative catalogue of possible hazards and enemies continues through verse 6. Verse 7 breaks this pattern, but implicitly suggests why Agni will remain on the poet's side: the god distinguishes between sacrificers and non-sacrificers, and he makes himself available to the former.

The hymn ends with a typical summary verse characterizing the hymn that precedes. The poet's claim that he has spoken "enigmas" seems overblown; in the universe of R̥gvedic discourse this hymn is remarkably straightforward, and Agni is unlikely to find interpreting it particularly challenging. The final verse does, however, draw attention to a structural feature of the hymn: the first seven verses all contain the vocative of the god's name, in insistent initial position in the first three, then somewhat postponed in the next four. In the summary verse the direct address to Agni is absent, and he appears instead in the locative, a grammatical shift that underlines the change of topic.

1. O Agni, lead us to wealth by an easy path, since you know all the (ritual) patterns, o god.
   Keep from us transgression, going its crooked way. Might we offer you the greatest expression of reverence.
2. O Agni, deliver us anew to the far shore, beyond all hardships, with your blessings.
   And become a wide fortress, thick and broad, for us, and luck and lifetime for our progeny and posterity.
3. O Agni, keep from us afflictions, (so) they will afflict peoples without Agni's protection.
   Renew the earth for us to go easily upon it, o god worthy of the sacrifice, along with all the immortals.
4. Protect us, Agni, with your unwearying protectors, and when you blaze here in your own dear seat.
   Let not fear find your singer, neither now nor later, o youngest mighty one.
5. Do not release us, Agni, to the evil man, nor to the greedy one, the cheat, nor to misfortune.
   Do not hand us over to the toothed one who bites nor to the toothless, nor to one who does harm, o strong one.
6. One like you, o Agni born of truth, when hymned, will stretch wide a shield for our body

from everyone who seeks to harm or to revile—for you watch widely
over crooked ways, o god.

7. Distinguishing between the two [=sacrificers and non-sacrificers?], you
pursue the sons of Manu at the early mealtime, o Agni worthy of the
sacrifice.
At the later mealtime you become tractable for Manu, to be groomed
like a foal [?] by the fire-priests.
8. We have spoke enigmas in his presence—I, the son of Māna, (have
spoken them) in the presence of mighty Agni.
May we win a thousand together with the seers. – May we know
refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.190 Bṛhaspati

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Bṛhaspati, the lord of formulations, is here presented as both producer and receiver of sacred speech and sound. This theme is established in the first verse, where my chants strengthen Bṛhaspati, who himself is the "leader of song." The physical movement of words and sound—between mortals and gods, between earth and heaven—is a repeated theme in the hymn (see esp. vss. 2, 4, 7). The difficult verses 3 and 4 concern a particular kind of sacred sound, the signal-call (*ślóka*) that Bṛhaspati launches daily, most likely a call announcing the sacrifice or some part of it.

The Bṛhaspati depicted in this hymn is no mere gentle wordsmith, but militant and aggressive, compared to a bellowing bull (vs. 1), a fearsome wild beast (vss. 3, 4), a bird of prey (vs. 7). His words are missiles (vs. 4), and those who underestimate him and seek to exploit him receive his punishment (vs. 5).

1. With chants I will strengthen anew the unassailable bull of gladdening
tongue, Bṛhaspati,
the brightly shining leader of song to whom the gods and the mortals
harken as he bellows.
2. Words follow close upon him in proper sequence, like a gush that has
been sent gushing from those serving the gods,
for Bṛhaspati, far-ranging straightway through the wide spaces, has
become equal to Mātariśvan in regard to truth.
3. A praise song and an offering of reverence, as well as his signal-call, will
he hold forth, like Savitar his two arms—
(the call) that happens every day according to his will, (the call) of the
undemonic, which is powerful like a fearsome wild beast.

4. When his signal-call speeds in heaven and on earth like a steed, the discriminating one [=Bṛhaspati?], bringing wondrous apparitions, will control it, *like a steed—
   as also when these missiles [=words] of Bṛhaspati, like the charges of wild beasts, go to the heavens that possess serpentine wiles.
5. Those who are wicked and tough, who live off you who are good, taking you for a ruddy little bullock, o god—
   to the evil-minded one you do not concede anything of value; you just punish the reviler, Bṛhaspati.
6. (You are) easy to approach like a path leading to good pastures, but difficult to hold onto like an ally gratified by (all those) around.
   The unassailable ones who watch over us have taken their stand, unclosing the enclosed (cows).
7. On whom the chants, like streams, converge, like rivers on the sea with their banks as wheels,
   Bṛhaspati, the knowing one, gazes between both, the ford and the waters, (like) a bird of prey.
8. Just so has the great, powerful one, powerfully born, the bull Bṛhaspati, the god, been established in his place.
   When praised, let him establish for us what brings heroes and cows.
   – May we know refreshment and a community having lively waters.

I.191 Against Poisonous Animals

Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
16 verses: anuṣṭubh, except mahāpaṅkti 10–12, mahābṛhatī 13

Very Atharvan in style, this hymn, directed against stinging and poisonous insects, does indeed have a number of parallels and near-parallels in the Atharvaveda. Like that text, it frequently uses expressions of the immediate past (especially in the aorist) as a triumphant predictor of successful measures taken in the present. That is, a statement like "they have been wiped out" (vs. 1d), though apparently referring to the past, probably instead announces, hopefully, that the current verbal spell along with whatever physical magic practices have been undertaken will ensure that the desired effect will have happened this instant. Unfortunately we have no real idea what the physical rites involved, though judging from parallels like Atharvaveda VII.56, entitled by Whitney "Against poison of snakes and insects," it may well have involved healing plants and insect-eating birds.

The first nine verses of the hymn are directed particularly against *adṛ́ṣṭa*—"the unseen, invisible"—apparently small biting insects. English has a remarkably close counterpart in the colloquially named "no-see-ums," which also share behaviors with their Sanskrit counterparts: clinging to grasses (vs. 3) and becoming especially virulent in the early evening (vss. 4–5). And anyone who has ever attempted to swat

a flying bug ruefully recognizes the commands given in verse 6: “stand still! come to rest!”

In the rest of the hymn (vss. 10–16) the speaker works to render ineffective and harmless the poison of poisonous insects more generally. One of the most salient features of this part of the hymn is the density of diminutivization, that is, of the use of the colloquial, low-register -*ka*-suffix, which appears not only on nouns referring to bugs and birds, but also on pronouns and demonstrative adjectives (vss. 11, 15) and even on a participle (vs. 16). (For further on the sociolinguistics of the -*ka*-suffix, see Jamison 2009b). Though for the most part the tools deployed against the poison are homely ones—little birds and plants, insofar as we can tell—this section of the hymn begins with higher rhetorical ambitions and a mythic model. In verse 10, whose interpretation is much disputed, the speaker fastens the poison on the sun and the skin containing the poison (in our view) “on the house of the possessor of liquor (*surā*).” Although most commentators, beginning at least with Sāyaṇa, interpret the latter action as an unmarked simile likening this action to the fastening of the poison on the sun, in our view it is a parallel mytho-ritual action and provides the mythic model for the ritual actions that follow. Again in our view, the possessor of liquor is Indra—a reference to a myth well known in the Brāhmaṇas and already clearly present in the late R̥gveda (X.131.4–5), in which Indra, sickened from drinking an excess of soma, is made to drink the usually forbidden alcohol surā by the Aśvins and Sarasvatī. The surā was not pure but mixed, and both the Aśvins and Indra perform the singular feat of separating the two mixed liquids in the course of drinking them—a detail found in the R̥gvedic treatment just cited. The ability to separate liquids, to get rid of (or nullify the effects of) the noxious one and preserve the beneficial one, is what the ritual performer desires here, as the last two pādas of the refrain (vss. 10–13ef) make clear.

1. The stinger that isn’t a stinger, and the one that’s a real stinger—
   these are the two—they’re called fleas. The no-see-ums have been wiped out.
2. As she comes, she smashes the no-see-ums, and as she goes away, she smashes them.
   Smashing them down, she smashes them, and crushing, she crushes them.
3. The reeds and the damn reeds, the darbha-grasses and (the bugs) on the *sira*-plants [?],
   the no-see-ums on the *muñja*-grass and on the *vīraṇa*-grass—all have been wiped out at once.
4. The cows have sat down in the cowshed; the wild animals have settled down—
   down (also) the lights of the peoples. The no-see-ums have been wiped out.
5. And these very ones have come into sight in the early evening, like thieves.
   You no-see-ums seen by all, you have become recognized.

6. Your father is Heaven, and your mother the Earth. Your brother is Soma, and your sister Aditi.
   You no-see-ums seen by all, stand still! come to rest!
7. The ones on (my) shoulders, the ones on (my) limbs, the little needle bugs with their stingers out—
   you no-see-ums, there is nothing at all for you here. All of you, get worn down at once!
8. Up from the east comes the Sun—the smasher of the no-see-ums, seen by all,
   crushing all the no-see-ums and all the sorceries.
9. Up has flown yonder Sun, incinerating all the many—
   the Āditya (up) from the mountains, the smasher of the no-see-ums, seen by all.
10. I fasten the poison on the Sun, the skin (containing it) on the house of the possessor of liquor [=Indra].
    Even now he will not die, and we will not die.
    The mounter of the fallow bays [=Indra] has (made) its [=poison's] trek far in the distance; the honeyed (plant) has made you honey.
11. Such a little teeny *śakunti*-bird—that itty-bitty thing has eaten your poison.
    Even now she will not die, and we will not die.
    The mounter of the fallow bays [=Indra] has (made) its [=poison's] trek far in the distance; the honeyed (plant) has made you honey.
12. Three times seven, the little sparks [=small birds?] have swallowed the bloom of poison.
    Even now they will not die, and we will not die.
    The mounter of the fallow bays [=Indra] has (made) its [=poison's] trek far in the distance; the honeyed (plant) has made you honey.
13. Of the nine and ninety tormentors of poison,
    I have mentioned the names of all.
    The mounter of the fallow bays [=Indra] has (made) its [=poison's] trek far in the distance; the honeyed (plant) has made you honey.
14. The three-times-seven peahens, the seven spinster sisters,
    these have carried away your poison, like women with jugs (carrying) water.
15. Such a little teeny *kuṣumbha*-bug—I split that itty-bitty thing with a rock.
    Thence has the poison rolled forth, following channels facing away (from us).
16. The little teeny *kuṣumbha*-bug said this, as it made its teeny turn forth from the mountain:
    "Without juice is the poison of the little scorpion, without juice is your poison, little scorpion."

II

Maṇḍala II

The eponymous poet of Maṇḍala II, the first of the Family Books, is Gr̥tsamada, who was the son of Śunahotra Āṅgirasa and the adopted son of Śunaka Bhārgava according to Sāyaṇa and the Anukramaṇī. The hymns refer to the people of the poet as Gr̥tsamadas four times, but also as Śunahotras three times. Of the forty-three hymns in this maṇḍala, the Anukramaṇī ascribes all but seven to Gr̥tsamada himself. It attributes II.4–7 to Somāhuti Bhārgava, who would have thus belonged to the lineage of Gr̥tsamada's father by adoption, and II.27–29 either to Kūrma Gārtsamada or to Gr̥tsamada. One of the characteristic features of the hymns of this maṇḍala is that twenty-one of its hymns, almost half, end with the signature refrain of the Gr̥tsamadas, "May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes."

The maṇḍala has ten hymns in the Agni series, including one Āprī hymn (II.3), and twelve in the Indra series (II.11–22). Among the latter is one of the best-known Indra hymns, II.12, with its famous refrain, "he, o peoples, is Indra." Characteristically, Gr̥tsamada connects the heroic deeds of Indra to the acts of the ritual, so that the ritual practice becomes the guarantee that Indra will again perform his great deeds. Following the Indra series are four hymns to Brahmaṇaspati or Br̥haspati, the "lord of the sacred formulation" (II.23–26). In the first of these, Brahmaṇaspati or Br̥haspati appears as both a priestly companion of Indra and as Indra himself in his role as a priest-king, and in the second, Br̥haspati is Indra. Both refer to the Vala myth, in which Indra and his accompanying priests release the cattle by the power of the formulated truth. After two hymns, one to the Ādityas (II.27) and one to Varuṇa, the foremost of the Ādityas (II.28), there are a series of hymns to the All Gods (II.29, 31) or to various gods (II.30, 32). The last of these is a composite hymn in two different meters, honoring minor deities, including four female deities concerned with childbirth. Most of the remaining hymns of the maṇḍala are single hymns to other deities. Noteworthy among them are II.33, one of only three hymns in the R̥gveda to Rudra, II.35, the only hymn in the R̥gveda dedicated to Apām Napāt, the "Child of the Waters," and II.38, a hymn to Savitar that shows his role as the god of the evening who brings the world to rest. The final two hymns, II.42 and 43, are hymns to omen-birds, asking them to cry only auspicious cries and comparing their auspicious cries to the words and chants of the poets.

II.1 (192) Agni

Gr̥tsamada Bhārgava Śaunaka, originally Āṅgirasa Śaunahotra
16 verses: jagatī

This hymn is structured as a series of identifications—of the god Agni with priests, other gods, kin/social relations, qualities, body parts, and so on, with the identification mediated by the quality held in common.

Although the equations may at first seem randomly ordered, in fact they follow a logical progression. The first ones (vs. 2) identify Agni with human priests. (Priestly identifications are also found extensively in II.5. And for the relationship between particular priests and particular gods, see also the R̥tugraha hymns I.15, II.36–37.) In the next five verses (3–7) the variety of functions Agni discharges invite identification with a series of gods. Verses 8–9 then set Agni in the web of human relationships, of varying degrees of close kinship. We return to the divine (or semi-divine) world in verses 10–11, but the identifications here link him especially to ritual activity (the R̥bhus in vs. 10, who are associated with the Third Pressing and who achieved divinity by their ritual feats; the female divinities in vs. 11, who are regularly mentioned in the Āprī hymns) and prepare for the last section of the hymn (vss. 12–14). The R̥bhu verse (10) also contains an elaborate pun, while the identification of Agni with three *female* divinities in verse 11 would surely provoke attention in the audience. Agni's own ritual service, especially to the gods, provides the subject of verses 12–14. The last pāda of this last section (14d) provides a ring with the first verse (1d): "you were born blazing" (*jajñiṣe śúciḥ* 14d), reprising "you are born blazing" (*jāyase śúciḥ* 1d), in both cases with a mention of the plants as his source. This neat ring, which closes the series of individual identifications, sets the stage for the climactic verse 15 (before the refrain of 16), which proclaims Agni's complete superiority throughout heaven and earth.

The identifications are themselves structured by an extraordinary density of rhetorical repetition. Of the sixteen verses, the first fourteen begin with a form of the 2nd-person singular pronoun *tvám* "you," followed by the vocative *agne* "o Agni." In fact fifty-four pādas out of fifty-six open with a 2nd-person singular pronoun, in addition to other pronominal forms scattered in non-initial position. For example, there are seven forms of *tvám* in the first verse alone. The fifteenth verse (and the last before the refrain) begins, as usual, with *tvám*, but the vocative *ágne* is postponed till the opening of the second pāda—distracting the formula. As often, rhetorical patterns established earlier in a hymn are varied as the hymn comes to a close, and the change of pattern here draws attention to the climactic contents of verse 15 discussed just above. Though the rhetorical tool, repetition, is a blunt instrument, its effects are powerful.

This rhetorical pattern is especially striking because so many of the pronominal forms are nominatives and therefore unnecessary, since pronominal subjects need not be expressed in Sanskrit. Though some of these nominatives occur in equational

sentences (cf. *tvám agníd r̥tāyatáḥ* "you [are] the Agnidh of the one who follows truth") where a pronominal forms is often used in place of a copula, a surprising number of these equational sentences also employ a 2nd-person singular copula (*asi* [e.g., 3a, 5d] or equivalent), rendering a pronominal subject unnecessary. For further discussion see Jamison (2007: 59–60). Poetics, not grammar, is the driving factor.

The effect of this incantatory repetition of "you, Agni," taking place in front of the sacrificial fire on the ritual ground, combined with the sweep of equations identifying Agni with what comes to seem like everything on earth and in heaven, is to concentrate all of the cosmos into this small space, the sacrifical ground, and this single entity, the sacrificial fire—indeed making the sacrificial microcosm the equivalent of the macrocosm. The ordering of the identifications—starting and ending at the sacrifice, but in between ranging through both the divine and human realms—models the centrality of the sacrifice and of its focus, the sacred fire. It is a powerful beginning to the maṇḍala and to the Family Books in general.

1. You, Agni, (are born) throughout the days, you who are eager to blaze here; you (are born) from the waters, you from the stone,
   you from the trees, you from the plants, you, men-lord of men, are born blazing.
2. Yours, Agni, is the office of Hotar; yours that of Potar in its turn; yours that of Neṣṭar; you are the Agnidh [=Fire-Kindler] of the one who follows truth.
   Yours is the office of Praśāstar; you act as Adhvaryu; you are both the Brahman-priest and the houselord in our home.
3. You, Agni, as bull of beings, are Indra; you, wide-going, worthy of homage, are Viṣṇu.
   You, o lord of the sacred formulation, finder of wealth, are the Brahman [=Formulator]; you, o Apportioner, are accompanied by Plenitude.
4. You, Agni, whose commandments are steadfast, are King Varuṇa; you, wondrous to be invoked, become Mitra.
   You, as the lord of settlements who (offers) a common meal, are Aryaman; you, apportioning at the ritual distribution, o god, are Aṃśa [/Share].
5. You, Agni, (giving wealth) rich in heroes to the one who does honor, are Tvaṣṭar—yours is kinship, o you accompanied by the Wives (of the Gods) and possessing Mitra's might—
   You have given (wealth) rich in horses as the impeller of swift (horses) [=Child of the Waters]. You of many goods are the troop of men [=Maruts].
6. You, Agni, as lord of great heaven, are Rudra; you, as the troop of Maruts, are master of strengthening nourishment [=rain].
   You, as luck for livestock, drive with the ruddy winds (as horses); you, as Pūṣan, protect the ones doing honor, in your own person.

7. You, Agni, are Wealth-Giver to the preparer (of the offering); you, as the conferrer of treasure, are god Savitar.
   You, lord of men, as Bhaga [/Fortune] are master of goods; you are a protector in the house of him who has done you honor.
8. Toward you, Agni, as clanlord in the house do the clans stretch out straight—toward you, the king, easy to find.
   You, lovely-faced one, are lord over all; you are the counter(part) to thousands, hundreds, tens.
9. To you, Agni, as father, (do) men (approach) with their desires—to you, for brotherhood, (do they approach) with their (ritual) labor, you who are bright in body.
   You become the son of him who has done you honor; you as affectionate comrade—protect (him) from assault.
10. You, Agni, as [Ṛbhu/] the craftsman at hand, are to be rendered homage; you are master of the cattle-rich prize [/Vāja], of wealth.
   You radiate widely [/(are) Vibhvan]: burn through to giving! You seek to carve up and to stretch out the sacrifice.
11. You, god Agni, are Aditi for the pious; you, as Hotrā Bhāratī, are strengthened by song.
   You are Iḍā, bestowing a hundred winters in return for skill; you, o lord of goods, as obstacle-smasher, are Sarasvatī.
12. You, Agni, when well kept, are highest vigor. In your coveted color there are beauties in sight.
   You are the prize, furthering and lofty; you are wealth, ample, broad on all sides.
13. You, Agni, did the Ādityas make their mouth; you did the pure ones make their tongue, o poet.
   You do the Gift-Escorts escort in the ceremonies; in you do the gods eat the poured oblation.
14. O Agni, through your mouth do all the undeceptive immortals, the gods, eat the oblation poured into you.
   With you the mortals sweeten their pressed drink. You, as embryo of the plants, were born blazing.
15. You are both equal and a counter(part) to these by your might, and, o Agni, well-born god, you surpass them,
   since your strengthening nourishment here extends in its greatness through heaven and earth, through both world-halves.
16. The patrons—those who dispatch to the praisers a gift tipped with cows and ornamented with horses, o Agni—
   lead both us and them forth to a better state. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.2 (193) Agni

Gṛtsamada
13 verses: jagatī

The solar aspects of fire are emphasized, with a number of comparisons to and identifications with the sun, some of which are obscure and enigmatic (e.g., vs. 4). The twin themes of the whole hymn are encapsulated in the first verse: Agni installed in the ritual ground, performing the role of Hotar, and receiving oblations and hymns; Agni as the earthly counterpart of the blazing sun.

The hymn falls into two nearly equal parts. The first five verses are primarily descriptive, with Agni generally referred to in the 3rd person; verses 6–12 (13 is repeated from II.1.16) consist primarily of requests, addressed to Agni in the 2nd person. The first half establishes Agni's cosmic role, mediating between and watching over the heavenly and earthly realms and maintaining his position through the regular temporal alternations (for the latter, see esp. vs. 2). With Agni's cosmic dominance thus affirmed, the second half seeks to utilize these wider powers of his to enhance our own position in the cosmos. See, for example, verse 9, where the poet describes his poetic vision (*dhī́*) taking its place among the immortals in heaven, and verse 10, where he compares the brilliance of his own people with the sun, the same sun with which Agni is identified earlier.

There is also an emphasis on Agni perceiving and being perceived, enhanced by a pun in the Sanskrit on the verb *citaya*, which can mean both "appear, be perceived" and "perceive," sometimes simultaneously (vss. 4, 5, 10).

Stylistically the hymn seems designed deliberately to contrast with the preceding one (II.1). In that hymn Agni is *identified* with various beings and elements, whereas in this one, especially in the first half, Agni is *compared* to such third parties: the simile is the dominant figure. It is striking that II.1, by contrast, contains not a single simile.

1. With sacrifice increase Jātavedas; sacrifice to Agni with oblation, with song at length
   when he is kindled—(Agni) receiving pleasurable offerings, possessing solar glory, the heaven-ruling Hotar, sitting at the chariot-pole in the (ritual) enclosures.
2. Toward you have the nights and the dawns bellowed, o Agni, like milk-cows in good pastures to their calf.
   As the spoked wheel of heaven [=sun] (does) through the human (life-) spans, through the successive nights you shine, o you of many favors.
3. Him of wondrous power have the gods fitted down at the base of the airy realm [=on earth], as their spoked wheel of heaven and earth—
   Agni with his flaming flame—like a chariot worthy to be acquired, to be proclaimed like an envoy (installed) among the settled peoples.

4. Him, growing in the airy realm (as) in his own house, very bright like gold, they have set on a meandering (course),
appearing (like) the flying (udder) of Pṛśni [=cloud], observing with his eyes along (the whole length of) both races [=gods and men], like the protector of a path [?].
5. As Hotar let him encompass the whole ceremony. Toward him do the sons of Manu stretch out, with oblations and with song.
Golden-lipped, growing on these (hearths), quivering, appearing like heaven with its stars, he perceives along (the whole length of) the two world-halves.
6. When you have been kindled, (shine) richly for our well-being; even after you are entirely extinguished, shine wealth upon us.
Turn the two world-halves toward here, for our easy progress, o god Agni, (for them) to seek out the oblations of Manu.
7. Give us, Agni, lofty (prizes), give (prizes) in thousands. Open up the prize like a door, for (it) to be famed.
Turn heaven and earth eastward with a sacred formulation. Like the blazing sun, you have made the dawns flash forth.
8. On being kindled through (all) the dawns and the nights, like the sun he has shone with red radiance.
With the libations of Manu he conducts good ceremonies—the king of the clans, the guest dear to Āyu.
9. In this way, o foremost Agni, (hymnic) vision swells for us among the immortals dwelling in lofty heaven through the human (lifespans)—
(a vision like) a cow giving milk to the bard in the (ritual) enclosures, (bringing) by herself multiform (prizes) in hundreds at her impulsion.
10. May we, o Agni, by our steed get in sight of (wealth) in good heroes, or by our sacred formulation distinguish ourselves beyond (other) men.
Let our brilliance blaze upward among the five peoples like the sun, difficult to surpass.
11. O mighty one, become the one for us to proclaim—(as him) in whom the well-born patrons find nourishment,
whom the prize-winners approach to sacrifice, o Agni, as you shine amid (our) own offspring in (your) own house.
12. May we both, the praisers and the patrons, be in your protection, o Agni Jātavedas.
Over goods and wealth—much glittering, very abundant, consisting of offspring and good descendants—exert your control for us.
13. The patrons—those who dispatch to the praisers a gift tipped with cows and ornamented with horses, o Agni—
lead both us and them forth to a better state. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.3 (194) Āprī

Gr̥tsamada
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7

This is one of the ten so-called Āprī hymns in the R̥gveda, a litany recited at the animal sacrifice: the subjects of the verses appear in a fixed order, each signaled by a key word (italicized in the following translation), though the exact wording of each differs from hymn to hymn. This type of flexible composition around a set of fixed themes and terms in a fixed order may give us some insight into R̥gvedic compositional techniques. This version is somewhat fuller and verbally richer than most, encouraged by the relatively capacious measures of triṣṭubh meter. For a minimalist version, see I.13.

1. Agni, *kindled*, deposited on the earth, has stood up facing all beings.
   The pure, very wise Hotar from olden days—let Agni the god sacrifice to the gods, (himself) deserving (it).
2. *Narāśaṃsa*, who anoints, counter(part) to the foundations (of the earth) and to the three heavens with his greatness, he of lovely flames,
   with his ghee-sprinkling mind wetting the oblation—at the head of the sacrifice let him anoint the gods altogether.
3. *Solemnly invoked* by (our) mind, o Agni, deserving (it), sacrifice today to the gods for us in front of the descendant of Manu.
   Convey here the unstirrable troop of the Maruts. You men, sacrifice to Indra who sits on the ritual grass.
4. O divine *Ritual Grass*—growing strong, affording good heroes, having a lovely burden [=the gods], strewn on this altar here for wealth.
   Good ones, sit here on it, which is anointed with ghee—all you gods, Ādityas, worthy of the sacrifice.
5. Let them gape open widely—the *Divine Doors*, easy to approach—when invoked with reverences.
   Expansive, let the unaging ones spread forth, purifying their own "color" [=people] (so that it is) glorious, rich in heroes.
6. Strengthened of old for us, *Dawn and Night*, like happy weavers on target at their labors,
   jointly interweaving the stretched thread, the ornament of the sacrifice—the good milk-cows rich in milk.
7. The first two *Divine Hotars*, more knowing, more wondrous, together will sacrifice rightly with their chant.
   Sacrificing to the gods according to the proper season, they jointly anoint them on the navel of the earth, on the three backs (of the fires).
8. *Sarasvatī*, who sends our poetic thought to its target, divine *Iḍā, Bhāratī* outstripping all—

let the three *goddesses*, having sat down on this ritual grass here, with their own power protect (its?) unbroken shelter.

9. Of tawny form, of good support [/easy to bear], conferring vigor, a hero desirous of the gods is born because of (Tvastar's?/the gods'?) attentive listening—
let *Tvaṣṭar* unbind (our) navel and release the offspring to us. Then let (the sacrificial victim) go into the pen of the gods.

10. The *Lord of the Forest* [=sacrificial post] stands by on releasing (the victim). Agni will sweeten the oblation with his poetic thoughts.
Let him who knows (the way) lead the thrice-anointed one—(let) the divine Butcher (lead) the oblation up to the gods.

11. Ghee is attached (to him); ghee is his womb. He is propped in ghee, and ghee is his foundation.
In accord with your own power convey (the gods) hither; invigorate yourself. O bull, you will convey the oblation, prepared with the *svāhā-call.*

II.4 (195) Agni

Somāhuti Bhārgava
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn first concerns itself with the installation of the ritual fire (vss. 1–3). There follows a naturalistic description, rich in metaphor and simile, of a fire first catching and then flaming up (vss. 4–7). The hymn ends with two verses requesting benefits for the Gr̥tsamada clan (8–9). Oblique references to the myth of the recovery of the vanished fire in verses 2 and 9 provide the hymn with a larger ring-like structure.

1. I call for you upon the one of good brilliance, on Agni, the guest of the clans, who receives well-twisted (hymns), who receives very pleasurable offerings,
who, like an envoy, has become desirable to install as god among the god-directed people, as Jātavedas.

2. This one here—having done honor (to him) in the seat of the waters— once again the Bhr̥gus have installed among the clans of Āyu.
Let him surmount all the worlds—Agni, the spoked wheel of the gods whose horses are lively.

3. Agni have the gods installed among the clans stemming from Manu, their own dear one, as those desiring to dwell peacefully (install) an envoy.
He will shine toward the nights desirous (of him), he whose skill is to be besought for the one rich in gifts in (his own) house.

4. His thriving, like one's own, brings delight; delightful is his whole appearance when he is being urged on, about to burn.
   He who is flicking his tongue hither and yon among the plants, like a steed at a chariot he keeps twitching his tail.
5. The formless mass [=smoke] of the wood-eater that they (first) marveled at to me, (that) color he changed as if for the fire-priests:
   he is (now) perceived in delight with his bright light, he who, having grown old, in an instant has become young.
6. Who, (eating) wood like one athirst, shines here; like water along a path, like chariot (wheels) he has sounded.
   Having a black road, red-hot, he appears bringing delight, smiling like heaven with its clouds [=his clouds of smoke].
7. He who has spread out, burning the broad (earth), like livestock without a herdsman he goes seeking his own way.
   Agni, enflamed, scorching the brushwood, with his black wayward course, has "sweetened," as it were, the ground.
8. Now, upon consideration of your previous help, a prayerful thought has been proclaimed to you at the third rite:
   o Agni, grant to us a prize of an array of heroes, a lofty cattle-rich one, and wealth in good descendants.
9. So that with you, o Agni, the Gr̥tsamadas, gaining (the one deposited) in secret [=Agni], might surmount those below,
   (the Gr̥tsamadas) possessing good heroes and overcoming hostility—(so) establish this vital energy for the singer along with his patrons.

II.5 (196) Agni

Somāhuti Bhārgava
8 verses: anuṣṭubh

As in II.1 we find an enumeration of various priestly functions/titles, but the identifications are more strictly tied to the ritual than in the former hymn, and each priest receives a verse of his own. Only in the last verse (8) does Agni appear as himself, without a separate priestly identity, to ensure the entire success of the sacrifice.

In verses 5–6 the references are somewhat obscure, but the ritual situation depicted seems to be the offering of melted butter into the fire; the butter offerings are identified as females, under the leadership of Agni as Neṣṭar, the priest who leads the Sacrificer's Wife in the later śrauta ritual. The referent of the "three" of verse 5 is quite obscure, though it must be feminine in gender. It is perhaps the "three watery maidens" associated with the sacrifice in III.56.5 and the three "women goddesses," also associated with water, who desire to provide food to Apām Napāt in II.35.5: their watery nature may explain Agni's preference for the buttery sisters.

Their number of three may allude to the trio of goddesses in the Āprī hymns (see, e.g., II.3.8), Sarasvatī, Iḍā, and Bhāratī.

The hymn provides valuable evidence for the technical details and the personnel and their duties of R̥gvedic ritual, which, though sharing much terminology and many procedures, nonetheless differs from the later, very well-documented, classical śrauta ritual of middle Vedic times.

1. As Hotar he has just been born, conspicuous, as a father to help his fathers [=priests],
   displaying noble goods. May we be able to control his prize-winning (horses [=flames]).
2. He to whom the seven reins are stretched—to the leader of the sacrifice—
   he, like Manu, (sets in motion) the heavenly eighth one—as Potar he sets in motion all this.
3. Or, when he has run after it, he will speak sacred formulations [*bráhmāṇi*] and pursue this (office of Brahman-priest):
   he has encompassed all poetic skills, like a felly a wheel.
4. Because simultaneously with his flame the flaming one has been born as Praśāstar by virtue of his will,
   the knowing one [=Agni] grows like (tree) branches, following his own firm commandments.
5. The lively milk-cows [=butter offerings] follow the "color" [=flame] of him (when he is) Neṣṭar.
   Surely the sisters [=streams of ghee] who have come here are (more) to his taste than the three ([watery] goddesses?)?
6. When the sister, bearing the ghee of the mother, has approached him,
   at the arrival of these, he, as Adhvaryu, is delighted, as grain is by rain.
7. Let him, as R̥tvij, make himself R̥tvij, to suckle himself.
   Praise and sacrifice have we given. Then fittingly may we win (their reward).
8. So that the knowing one [=Agni] will make (it) fitting for all those (gods) worthy of the sacrifice,
   this, o Agni, (should be) here in you—the sacrifice which we have performed.

II.6 (197) Agni

Somāhuti Bhārgava
8 verses: gāyatrī

There is nothing particularly striking in this hymn, which treats the usual themes of our ritual service to Agni and the rewards we expect in turn. But it is deftly done

and economically expressed in the short gāyatrī meter, with patterned repetitions perceptible even in translation (see, e.g., vss. 1, 3, 5). The final two verses present the common image of Agni as envoy and messenger between the human and divine worlds.

1. This kindling stick of mine here, o Agni, this reverence may you long for,
   and these songs—hear them well.
2. With this (song) we would do honor to you, o Agni, child of
   nourishment, seeker of horses—
   with this well-said (hymn), o well-born one.
3. You who have a longing for songs (we would serve) with songs; you
   seeking chattels, o chattel-giver,
   we would serve, ourselves seeking service.
4. Become our bounteous patron, o lord of goods who gives goods.
   Keep hatreds away from us.
5. Do you (give) us rain from heaven; do you (give) us an unassailable prize;
   do you (give) us refreshments in the thousands.
6. To the one reverently invoking, to the one seeking help, o youngest
   messenger,
   o Hotar most deserving the sacrifice, come here at our song.
7. For, o Agni, sage poet, as the one who knows, you speed between both
   breeds [=human and divine]
   as messenger—like one serving both his own people and their allies.
8. As the one who knows, you will please (the gods) here, and, o observant
   one, you will sacrifice to them in due order,
   and you will sit here on this ritual grass.

II.7 (198) Agni

Somāhuti Bhārgava
6 verses: gāyatrī

In this short hymn Agni is twice (vss. 1 and 5) identified as a Bhārata, "son of Bharata" or "belonging to the Bharata lineage," a name and designation that becomes very prominent in later times and, of course, furnishes the name of the great epic, the Mahābhārata. The family is less prominent in the Ṛgveda, but is mentioned in telling passages in Maṇḍalas III, VI, and VII; the Bhārata fire is mentioned in several other passages like the ones in this hymn. As Proferes argues (2007: 36–37), Agni is often identified with the tribal king, and "the most commonly mentioned tribal fire is that of the Bharata," which is "specifically linked to the military power of the tribe." Although that theme is not insistent here, the hostilities and hatreds mentioned in verses 2–3 against which Agni's aid is besought evoke this idea.

The hymn also illustrates, more clearly than usual, the poetic use of the metaphorical extension of ritual practices. In verse 4 the fire is "bepoured" (*ā́hutaḥ*) with streams of melted butter, a standard ritual action, which therefore would arouse no special interest in the audience; in verse 5 it is also "bepoured"—the same adjective in the same position in the verse—but with entities considerably less liquid: various bovines, expressed in technical stock-breeding language, which serve as animal sacrifices in the later śrauta ritual. The audience would certainly take note of this clash of concepts and metaphorically extend either the adjective (from "bepoured" to "offered to") or the offerings (not the cows, but their product, the ghee). What is unusual in this hymn is that verse 4 explicitly provides the normal template against which verse 5 must be interpreted. Ordinarily we encounter only the off-balance expression, and must ourselves summon the normal one from the formulaic and conceptual stock held in common by the audience.

1. Youngest Agni, belonging to the Bharatas, bear hither the best brilliant wealth,
   craved by many, o good one.
2. Let hostility of god and mortal not gain mastery over us.
   Rescue us from it and from hatred.
3. And with you may we, as if across watery streams,
   plunge across all hatreds.
4. O pure Agni, to be extolled, blazing you shine out loftily,
   when you are bepoured with ghee(-stream)s.
5. You, o Agni belonging to the Bharatas, are "bepoured" [=offered to] with our mated cows, with bulls,
   with eight-footed [=pregnant] (cows).
6. His food is wood, his potion melted butter—the primordial Hotar worthy to be chosen,
   son of strength, infallible.

II.8 (199) Agni

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: gāyatrī

A simple hymn in many ways, but with a small twist. The mention of the seer and poet Atri in verse 5 is surprising: Atri is the poet of the Vth Maṇḍala and is otherwise not found in II. However, in the immediately preceding verse the apparently innocent simile "like the sun with its radiance" (*svàr ṇá bhānúnā*) encodes a reference to a famous myth in which Atri rescues the sun from a supposed demon Svarbhānu. As I have argued (Jamison 1991: 264–67), Svarbhānu is actually Agni, and therefore this little hymn makes sly reference to the myth of the Sun, wounded by Agni (because of the Sun's incest with his own daughter) and healed by Atri.

1. As a prize-seeker (praises) his chariots, now praise the yoke(d teams) of Agni,
   the most glorious one, who grants rewards,
2. Who offers good guidance to the one doing pious work, himself unaging but aging the other,
   whose countenance is lovely when he is bepoured,
3. Who with his beauty is proclaimed in the houses at evening and at dawn,
   whose commandment is not confounded,
4. Who, like the sun with its radiance, shines forth bright with his flame,
   anointing himself with his own unaging (flames).
5. Atri and Agni, (each) according to his own sovereignty, have the solemn pronouncements strengthened.
   He has laid on himself all beauties.
6. May we be accompanied by the help of Agni, of Indra, of Soma, of (all) the gods—
   not suffering harm. May we surmount those who do battle.

II.9 (200) Agni

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with a 3rd-person past-time reference to the installation of Agni, and seems also to refer obliquely to the myth of Agni's disappearance and recovery by the gods. After verse 1 it switches to the 2nd person and present/future time, with standard praise of Agni and prayers for benefits from him.

1. (As) Hotar, once found, he sat down in the Hotar's seat, glittering, shining, very skillful,
   giving forethought to his unfalsifiable commandments, the best one bringing a thousand (goods), flame-tongued Agni.
2. You are the messenger, and you are our protector afar; you, bull, are our leader to a better (state).
   O Agni, for the prolonging of our progeny and of our own selves, become, as you shine, a herdsman who does not stay away.
3. We would do honor to you, Agni, in your highest birth; we would do honor with praises in your seat below.
   The womb from which you arose, I sacrifice to that. The oblations have been poured forth into you, when kindled.
4. O Agni, perform sacrifice yourself with an oblation, as superior sacrificer. With attentive hearing greet giving and generosity,
   for you are the wealth-lord of wealth, you the minder of brilliant speech.

5. As you are born day after day, wondrous one, your goods of both types are not exhausted:
   Agni, make the singer rich in cattle; make him lord of wealth in good descendants.
6. With your visage here, (be) easy to find, the sacrificer to the gods who best brings them to sacrifice with blessing.
   Undeceivable herdsman and our protector afar, o Agni, brilliantly and richly shine for us.

II.10 (201) Agni

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This last hymn in the brief Gr̥tsamada Agni cycle is defined by a ring: the first word (*johū́traḥ* "invoked on every side") is echoed by the last word (*johavīmi* "I constantly invoke"), and there are a number of word plays throughout the hymn. The hymn's structure defines as an omphalos verse 3, especially the second half, which contains the opaque hapax *śíriṇāyām*, here tentatively rendered as "(birth-)canal." Verse 3, the mysterious center of the poem, describes the creation of fire in terms of human conception and birth and expresses the paradox that such a powerful force can be invisibly confined in the inert wood. The last verse (6) contains a pun, "with a tongue seeking speech," applicable to both Agni and the poet: for Agni it is the flame as tongue, seeking the poet's praise hymn; for the poet, it is his own tongue, seeking efficacious wording for the same hymn.

1. Agni is invoked first on every side like a father, when he is kindled by Manu in the footprint of refreshment,
   dressing himself in beauty, immortal and discriminating, frequently to be groomed and worthy of fame: he is the prize-winning (steed).
2. May he please hear my call—Agni of bright radiance—along with all my songs—he immortal and discriminating.
   Two dark brown horses convey his chariot, or two red ones. And two ruddy ones certainly he has made his (team), he who is dispersed in many places.
3. In her with (legs) agape [=kindling sticks] they engendered him whose birth is easy. Agni becomes the embryo in the (women) of many ornaments [=logs].
   In (the birth-)canal [?] also he dwells by night, (though) because of his powers he cannot be confined, the discerning one.
4. I sprinkle Agni with an oblation, with ghee, as he abides peacefully facing all the creatures,

(and he then) takes on (this) appearance: broad across, lofty in his vigor,
most voluminous through his foods [=wood], overpowering.

5. Him who faces out in all directions do I sprinkle: with an undemonic spirit may he enjoy it.
(Though) he has the beauty of a young blood and questing "color" [=flame], Agni is not to be touched when he is quivering with his body.
6. May you please recognize (your) share, (though you can) display your might at will. With you as messenger may we speak like Manu.
Agni, without deficiency, mixing with honey, with (my/his) tongue seeking speech, do I, winning prizes, continually invoke.

II.11 (202) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
21 verses: virāṭsthānā triṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 21

Judging from its frequent references to the winds, this Indra hymn was composed to accompany the day's first soma-pressing, which anciently belonged especially to Indra and Vāyu, the Wind. It is also a good example of the complexity of R̥gvedic poetry. The poet uses ellipses and ambiguous reference to suggest the union of the acts of the accompanying ritual and the action of the myth. In verse 3, for example, the "resplendent" (*śubhrá*) ones who run to the wind are the Maruts, the gods who so often accompany Indra. But the adjective "resplendent" is also used of soma, and therefore the verse carries a second, suggested meaning that the offering of soma goes to the Wind, who receives the soma along with Indra. Or again, in verses 7–8, it appears at first as though the mountain described there is one of the mountains settled by Indra when he made the world habitable. But this mountain is described in odd ways: it does not falter; it bellows with its mothers; and it roars—descriptions that force a reconsideration of its identity. Elsewhere these epithets characterize the fire, which is "settled" by priests on the sacrificial area. Thus, the creative actions of the god and the ritual actions of the priests are placed in parallel and made reflexes of one another. For a detailed analysis of this hymn, which seeks to demonstrate its double reference to myth and ritual, see Brereton (1985).

1. Hear our summons, Indra! Intend us no harm! We would be those to be given good things by you.
For these nourishments, like flowing rivers, strengthen you in their quest for good things.
2. You let loose the great (waters), Indra, which you swelled—the many (waters) surrounded by the serpent [=Vr̥tra], o champion.
You cut down the Dāsa [=Vr̥tra], even though he thought he was immortal, when you became strong through the hymns.

3. (Delight) now in just these hymns in which you delight, o champion, and in Rudrian praise songs, Indra.
These (waters), in which you are finding exhilaration, run forth just to you as the resplendent ones (run forth) to the Wind [=Vāyu].
4. Now (that we) are strengthening your resplendent explosiveness, are placing in your arms your resplendent mace,
resplendent are you, Indra, as you have become strong among us. Along with the sun, you should overcome the Dāsa clans.
5. The one placed in hiding, the hidden one hiding amid the waters, the wily one dwelling under cover
and blocking the waters and the heaven—(that) serpent you smashed by your heroic deed, o champion.
6. Now I shall praise your ancient, great deeds, Indra, and we shall praise your present deeds.
I shall praise the eager mace in your arms. I shall praise your fallow bays, twin beacons of the sun.
7. Now your two fallow bays, competing for the prize, Indra, have cried out their cry, dripping with ghee.
The land has spread out equally in all directions. Even the mountain, which was about to run, has come to rest.
8. The mountain, never faltering, has been set down. Bellowing with its mothers, it roared.
Making their voice strong to the furthest distance, they [=priests or Maruts?] spread out the vein [=the sap-rich soma stalk or a watercourse?] that was impelled by Indra.
9. Indra kicked away wily Vr̥tra, lying upon the great river.
The two worlds trembled in fear before the mace of him, the bull roaring and roaring again.
10. The mace of him, the bull, bellowed again and again when (Indra), the ally of Manu, was about to grind down (Vr̥tra), the enemy of Manu.
He brought low the wiles of the wily son of Dānu, when he had drunk of the pressed soma.
11. Drink and drink the soma, o Indra, our champion! Let the exhilarating soma-pressings exhilarate you.
As they fill your cheeks, let them strengthen you. When properly pressed among the Paura, (the soma) has helped Indra.
12. We inspired poets have abided by you, Indra. Serving according to the truth, we would gain insight.
Seeking your help, we would create for ourselves a proclamation of your praise. On this very day, we would be those to be given wealth by you.
13. Indra, might we be those of yours who are accompanied by your help, since, seeking your help, we make your nourishment strong.
Grant us the most explosive wealth in which we will delight, o god—that consisting of heroic men.

14. Grant us peaceful dwelling. Grant us alliance. Grant us a Marutian warrior band, o Indra.
    And they who jointly are finding exhilaration—(those) Winds drink the first offering.
15. Now let just those (soma juices) pursue you—those among whom (you) are becoming exhilarated. Steadfastly drink our soma to your satisfaction, Indra.
    (Be) near to us in battles, o surpassing one. You have strengthened heaven through lofty chants.
16. Now just those lofty ones [=priests], who will try to win your favor, o you surpassing one, either by their hymns
    or in strewing the ritual grass that provides (you) a dwelling place, have come to the prize, helped just by you, Indra.
17. Now, finding exhilaration among just these powerful (soma drops), o champion, drink the soma among the Trikadrukas [=the Maruts?], Indra,
    again and again shaking out (the soma) in your beard, becoming pleased. Travel to the soma-drinking with your two fallow bays.
18. Take to yourself the vast power, o champion, by which you cut down Vṛtra, the son of Dānu, that son of a spider!
    You uncovered the light for the Ārya; the Dasyu has been set down to the left, Indra.
19. We would win!—we who by your help are overcoming all rivals, the Dasyus along with the Ārya.
    That was for us: that you made Viśvarūpa, son of Tvaṣṭar, submit to Trita, one of your circle of companions.
20. Having grown strong on this, Trita's exhilarating (soma) that was being pressed, he laid low Arbuda.
    He rolled (Namuci's head) like the sun its wheel. Together with the Aṅgirases, Indra split the Vala cave.
21. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
    Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.12 (203) Indra

Gṛtsamada
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the better known and most widely anthologized hymns to Indra. Its distinctive rhetorical mark is its refrain, "he, o peoples, is Indra." The "peoples"

(*jána*) refer to the Vedic peoples, and the hymn repeatedly returns to Indra's past victories over non-Vedic beings with the promise of future victories.

The hymn portrays Indra as a successful warrior. It begins with his origin (vs. 1) and then refers to his great deeds through which the world was created and made inhabitable (vss. 2–3). The poet then announces Indra's victory over Dāsas, Dasyus, and other enemies and his aid for his worshippers and allies (vss. 4–10). Toward the end of the hymn, the poet mentions Indra's famous victories over his demonized, if not quite demonic, enemies (vss. 11–12). Then he returns to Indra's rule over the cosmos (vs. 13) and his help for those now making ritual offerings to him (vss. 14–15).

One verse that has attracted particular attention is verse 5, which says that there are some who wonder where Indra is and who declare that Indra "does not exist." These appear to be Vedic people who question Indra's power and who, in denying Indra and refusing to perform the rituals, approximate the Dāsas, whom Indra defeats (vs. 4). The poet insists that they should be aware of Indra as the "terrifying" (*ghorá*) one and trust in him. At the end, in 15b, after recounting his great exploits, the poet himself confidently asserts that Indra is indeed real. The reality of Indra may signify not only his existence as a powerful god, but more especially his actual presence at the poet's sacrifice.

1. Who, even when just born, was the foremost thinker, the god who by his own will tended to the gods,
   before whose explosiveness the world-halves trembled in fear because of the greatness of his manliness – he, o peoples, is Indra.
2. Who made firm the wavering earth, who settled the quaking mountains,
   who gave the midspace wider measure, who propped up the heaven – he, o peoples, is Indra.
3. Who, having smashed the serpent, let flow the seven rivers, who drove away the cattle by uncovering Vala,
   who produced the fire between two stones, gathering the winnings in contests – he, o peoples, is Indra.
4. By whom all these exploits have been done: who has put the Dāsa tribe below and hidden away,
   who, has taken the riches of the stranger, as a winning gambling champion does the wager – he, o peoples, is Indra.
5. The terrifying one about whom they always ask, "Where is he?"—and they say of him, "He does not exist!"—
   he diminishes the riches of the stranger like the stakes. Put trust in him! – he, o peoples, is Indra.
6. Who is the invigorator of the enfeebled, who of the starving, who of the formulator of hymns, of the weak one needing help,
   who with fair lips is the helper of the one who has yoked the pressing stones, of him with soma pressed – he, o peoples, is Indra.
7. Under whose direction are the horses, under whose the cows, under whose the nomadic bands, and under whose all the chariots,

who has given birth to the sun and who to the dawn, who is the guide of the waters – he, o peoples, is Indra.

8. Whom the two war-cries, clashing together, call upon in rivalry—the enemies on both sides, here and over there—
even the two who have mounted the same chariot [=the chariot-warrior and charioteer] call on him separately – he, o peoples, is Indra.
9. Without whom peoples do not win, whom they call upon for help as they fight,
who has become a match for everyone, who is the mover of the immovable – he, o peoples, is Indra.
10. Who has struck with his arrow those constantly creating for themselves great guilt, the unthinking ones,
who does not concede arrogance to the arrogant man, who is the smasher of the Dasyu – he, o peoples, is Indra.
11. Who in the fortieth autumn discovered Śambara dwelling in the mountains,
who smashed the serpent displaying its strength, the son of Dānu, (thereby) lying (dead) – he, o peoples, is Indra.
12. The mighty seven-reined bull who let loose the seven rivers to flow,
who, with his mace in his arms, kicked away the son of Rohiṇī as he was ascending to heaven – he, o peoples, is Indra.
13. Even heaven and earth bow to him; even the mountains fear his explosiveness.
The soma-drinker who is renowned as the one bearing the mace in his arms, as the one bearing the mace in his hands – he, o peoples, is Indra.
14. Who helps through his help the one pressing soma, the one cooking (an offering), the one praising, the one laboring,
whose is the strengthening formulation, is the soma, is this gift – he, o peoples, is Indra.
15. You who rip free the prize of victory for the one pressing, the one cooking, even before a stubborn (foe)—you are certainly real!
We (will be) dear to you throughout all the days, Indra. Having good heroes, we would announce the ritual distribution.

II.13 (204) Indra

Gṛtsamada
13 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13

The opening verses of this hymn leave the subject often unstated and often unclear in part because, as in the preceding hymns, there is often a double reference to ritual acts and either mythical or natural events. Thus, while details remain uncertain,

the first verses describe the soma sacrifice, seen as a creation of Indra. This ritual context is established in verse 1, in which the subject is likely the soma or the soma plant. The birth of the soma plant occurs in its proper time of year, and therefore its mother is the *ṛtú*, its "season." However, the soma is also born at the proper ritual moment, and therefore its mother is also *ṛtú*, which can also refer to the "ritual sequence." Then in verse 2, again without naming him, the poet introduces Indra—or apparently does so—through associating Indra's release of the waters with the flowing, soma-bearing waters of the rite.

Verses 3–4 describe the acts of the ritual, although in 4b, the identity of several of the actors is not certain. The one "who comes" could be soma or Indra or even the fire (as Geldner suggests with a different interpretation of the ellipsis). The poet turns to Indra's heroic deeds in verse 5—although the waters which he released connect these deeds to the ritual—and then in verse 6, to an explicit description of Indra's ritual acts. Verse 7 poses a number of interpretive difficulties, but in pāda a, the "flowering and fruitful" might be plants generally or the soma plants; in pāda b, the streams might be waters or specifically ritual waters; and in pāda d, the *ūrvá*, the "containers," might refer to the oceans as containers of water in a cosmic register or the containers of soma in a ritual one.

Verses 8–12 mention other of Indra's deeds. In verse 9 Geldner suggests that Indra bound his enemies by a magically induced sleep and thus by that "which has no ropes." See also II.15.9, where Indra conquers his enemies by putting them to sleep. Verse 12, returning to the conjunction of heroic and ritual deed and to the theme of rivers and waters, may speak not (or not only) of Indra's rescue of a person who was blind and lame, but of Indra's role in producing the soma hidden in the plant before it is pressed out (cf. II.15.7).

1. His mother is the season. From her, as soon as he was born, he [=soma] entered among the waters, in whom he grows strong.
   Then he became a voluptuous woman, swelling with milk. The plant's first beestings—that one is worthy of hymns.
2. Toward a single goal they [=the waters] come, bringing milk throughout. They bring forth sustenance for him [=Indra?] who is all mother's milk (for us).
   The downward sloping (watercourses) share the same road to flow along. You, who did these things first, are worthy of hymns.
3. One [=the Hotar] accompanies what he gives with his speech. Another [=the Adhvaryu] hastens at his work, changing the forms (of the soma).
   He [=soma] withstands all the blows of another [=the pressing stone]. You, the one who did these things first, are worthy of hymns.
4. They [=the priests] sit, apportioning prosperity to their children [=their fires], apportioning, like wealth, the back (of the fire?) as it arches forth to him [=the soma?] who comes.

Insatiable, he [=the fire] eats the food of his father [=the priest] with his teeth. You, the one who did these things first, are worthy of hymns.

5. Then you made the earth to see heaven—you, who cleared the paths of the streams, o smasher of the serpent.
The gods gave birth to you, the god, by their praise songs, like a winning horse by waters. You are worthy of hymns.
6. You, who distribute sustenance and increase, have milked the dry [=the soma plant] together with its honey [=the soma] out of the wet [=rain].
You have hidden a treasure [=soma] in Vivasvant [=the sun]. You alone are the master of everything. You are worthy of hymns.
7. You, who established separately the flowering and fruitful (plants) according to the foundation (of each) and the streams at their division;
and you, who gave birth to the unequalled flashings of heaven; you, the wide one surrounding the containers—you are worthy of hymns.
8. You, who, in order to strike down Pr̥kṣa and Dāsaveśa, conveyed the son of Nr̥mara together with his goods
to the impregnable mouth of the Ūrjayantī (River) and who even today (would do likewise); you, who do many deeds—you are worthy of hymns.
9. Or when you helped him, the hard-driving one—at whose obedience (to you), though he was alone, you bound his hundred times ten (enemies) all at once—
you tied up the Dasyus for Dabhīti in what has no ropes, and you belonged to him who ritually pursues you well. You are worthy of hymns.
10. All things that obstruct have conceded that manliness is his. They have set themselves as the stakes for the successful gambler.
You propped up the six far-flung (spaces), and you were on every side of the five sights [=the visible directions] and beyond. You are worthy of hymns.
11. Your heroism, o hero, is good to proclaim: that by your resolve alone you take possession of goods.
The vigor (belonging to you, who are) born steadfast and possessing strength, is preeminent. All the things that you have done—(for these) you, Indra, are worthy of hymns.
12. You halted the course of the Sarapas (River) for Turvīti and Vayya to cross.
You led him up who was sunk down and shunned, making famed the blind one and the lame. You are worthy of hymns.
13. Make your aim to give that gift to us, o good one—your store of goods is great—

the bright (gift), o Indra, through which you will seek fame throughout the days. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.14 (205) Indra

Gṛtsamada
12 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a surprisingly straightforward summons to the Adhvaryu priests to offer the soma and a catalogue of the heroic deeds that have earned Indra the offerings. Verse 7 is particularly interesting since Kutsa (or Purukutsa), Āyu, and Atithigva Divodāsa are normally allies rather than enemies of Indra as they are here. Elsewhere (I.53.10 and VI.18.13), however, Indra appears as an ally of the little-known ruler named Tūrvayāṇa and helps him defeat these three.

1. Adhvaryus! Bring the soma to Indra. With the tankards, pour here the exhilarating stalk,
   because the hero is ever desirous of his drink. Offer to the bull: he wishes just that.
2. Adhvaryus! Who struck, like a tree with a spear, Vṛtra, who had enclosed the waters,
   to him bring this (soma) since he desires it. This Indra deserves to drink it.
3. Adhvaryus! Who struck Dṛbhīka and who drove up the cattle—for he had opened the cave—
   to him (bring) this (soma), (rushing swiftly) like the wind within the midspace. Cover Indra with the soma juices, as a fast horse (is covered) with blankets (after a race).
4. Adhvaryus! Who smashed Uraṇa, who had stretched forth his nine and ninety arms,
   and who pressed Arbuda down to the depth—urge Indra onward at the bringing of soma.
5. Adhvaryus! Who struck Aśna, who the voracious Śuṣṇa, who the cobra [=Vṛtra],
   who Pipru and Namuci, who Rudhikrā—to Indra offer of the soma plant.
6. Adhvaryus! Who split the hundred, the many fortresses of Śambara as with a stone,
   and who scattered afar the hundred, the thousand (warriors) of Varcin—to him bring soma.
7. Adhvaryus! Who, having struck them, scattered here the hundred, the thousand on the lap of the earth,

and slung down the heroes of Kutsa, Āyu, and Atithigva—to him
bring soma.

8. Adhvaryus! What you will desire, o men, you will attain that with Indra,
by bearing (offerings) in obedience.
Bring what is purified by your hand to the one who is famed. To Indra
offer soma, o you eager to sacrifice.
9. Adhvaryus! Act in obedience to him! Lead upward in the wood [=the
soma cup] what is purified downward in the wood [=the soma vat]!
Being pleased, he has bellowed toward your handiwork. To Indra offer
the exhilarating soma.
10. Adhvaryus! Like the udder of a cow with milk, fill Indra the Provider
with soma juices.
I know of him; this has been brought home to me: the one worthy of
the sacrifice takes notice of him who strives to give more.
11. Adhvaryus! Who is king of the heavenly good, who of the land's
earthly good,
fill Indra with soma juices, like a granary with barley. Let that be
your labor.
12. Make your aim to give that gift to us, o good one—your store of goods
is great—
the bright (gift), o Indra, through which you will seek fame throughout
the days. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in
possession of good heroes.

II.15 (206) Indra

Gṛtsamada
10 verses: triṣṭubh

As the hymn announces at the beginning, this is a proclamation of Indra's great deeds, a fact that is underlined in the refrain, "Indra did these things." With some exceptions, the deeds are straightforwardly described. In verse 5, as Geldner remarks, the reference is to the story of Turvaśa and Yadu and that of Turvīti and Vayya, whom Indra rescued from the waters. They were "non-bathers" because they could not swim through the roaring waters, but Indra held back the strong currents so that they could cross. The story in verse 6a that Indra made the *síndhu*, the Indus (or perhaps simply "the river"), flow backward is otherwise unknown. The story that Indra fought and defeated Dawn in 6c is mentioned elsewhere (cf. esp. IV.30.8–11), but it is unclear who the "unswift" males and "swift" females in 6c might be and why they are described as "hewn apart." In verse 7, as in II.13.12, the verse may conceal Indra's ritual act of bringing forth the soma. In support of this interpretation are the echoes of ritual acts also in

preceding verses, such as the references to the ritual seats and possibly the laying out of the ritual ground (in vs. 3) and bathing (in vs. 5). Or verse 7 may allude to Indra's cosmogonic acts. Verse 8 refers to the Vala story, in which Indra splits the cave and freed the cattle for the Aṅgirases. In 9c, the description of an elderly man (cf. VIII.45.20) or infirm man who finds riches despite his ailments may simply underline Dabhīti's unexpected success.

1. Now I shall proclaim the great deeds of him the great one, the real acts of the real one.
   He drank of the pressed soma among the Trikadrukas [=the Maruts?].
   In its exhilaration Indra smashed the serpent.
2. He propped up lofty heaven on (the midspace) that has no pole. He filled the two world-halves and the midspace.
   He held the earth fast and spread it out. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
3. Like (ritual) seats, he fixed (the rivers) eastward with his measuring rods: by his mace, he drilled out channels for the rivers;
   by his choice, he released them along paths stretching far away. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
4. Having surrounded the raiders against Dabhīti, he burned their every weapon in the kindled fire.
   He brought him together with cows, horses, and chariots. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
5. He stopped the great, tumultuous (river) from going. He made the non-bathers cross over safely.
   Having risen from this bath, they set out toward wealth. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
6. By his greatness he made the Sindhu to flow northward, and with his mace he completely crushed the ox cart of Dawn,
   while hewing apart the unswift ones by the swift ones. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
7. Knowing the maidens' concealment (of him but) becoming manifest, he stood up—he who was shunned:
   the lame one stood firm; the blind one looked afar. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
8. Being sung by the Aṅgirases, he split the cave. He broke apart the fortifications of the mountain
   and cleared their fashioned obstructions. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.
9. Having scattered sleep on Cumuri and Dhuni, you smashed the Dasyu and helped Dabhīti.
   Though leaning on a staff, he found gold there. – In soma's exhilaration Indra did these things.

10. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.16 (207) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The hymn begins with an announcement of the sacrifice to Indra, whose greatness and strength entitle him to it. The middle verses of this hymn (vss. 4–6) present Indra as the bull of the sacrifice and indeed describe all the other principal constituents of the sacrifice also as bulls. The portrayal of Indra as a bull in these verses contrasts with that in verse 8, in which Indra is compared to a cow. However, this image of Indra as a cow sets up the final verse (9). In this verse, which is also the final verse of II.15–20, the poet compares the dakṣiṇā, or priestly gift he hopes to receive, to a generous cow.

1. I carry forward your good praise, like an oblation into a fire being kindled, for him who is the most preeminent of beings:
we call upon Indra for help—himself unaging but causing to age, a full-grown youth from of old.
2. Lofty Indra, without whom there is nothing, in him all facets of a hero are gathered:
in his belly he carries the soma, in his body great strength, in his hand a mace, and in his head resolve.
3. Your Indrian power cannot be encompassed by the twin battle cries [=heaven and earth], nor can your chariot by the seas and the mountains, o Indra.
No one is equal to your mace when with your swift (horses) you fly through many leagues.
4. Since all carry their resolve to him, the one worthy of the sacrifice, the daring one, to the bull following (that resolve),
(so), as a bull who knows more, perform the sacrifice for yourself with the oblation: drink the soma, Indra, by means of the bull [=Agni], by means of his radiance.
5. The vat of the bull [=soma], the wave of honey, purifies itself for the bull [=Indra], whose food is the bull, to drink it.
The two Adhvaryus are bulls, and the pressing stones are bulls. They press soma the bull for the bull.

6. Your mace is a bull and your chariot is a bull. Your two fallow bays are bulls, and your weapons are bulls.
   O bull, you are the master of the bull that is the exhilarating drink. Indra, take your fill of the bull soma.
7. Within the assembly, (I send) forth to you my eloquent (formulation), like a boat, and through my poetic formulation I travel daringly among the soma-pressings.
   He will be aware of this speech of ours, will he not? We will draw upon Indra as upon a wellspring for what is good.
8. Before distress (strikes), turn here toward us, like a cow, milk-swollen from the pasture, toward her calf.
   At once we would happily unite with your favors, o you of a hundred resolves, like bulls with their wives.
9. Now should the generous priestly reward yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
   Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.17 (208) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8–9

This hymn encourages Indra to show the power that he showed at the beginning—both his beginning and the beginning of the world. There are several references to Indra's youth: the time when he received his mace from his father, Tvaṣṭar (vs. 6), and when he obtained his first nurture (vs. 2). The first nurture may refer to the first soma offering in the rite and also to the first soma Indra ever drank. His origins are also the origins of the world, and the hymn catalogues his great, creative deeds: he established heaven and earth and settled the mountains (vs. 5), he opened the cave to release the cattle (vs. 1), he defeated Vr̥tra (vs. 6), and he sent the waters flowing (vss. 3, 5). The poet calls upon Indra to give sustenance to him just as he has received sustenance (vss. 7, 8) and to give to him a measure of wealth just as Indra showed the measure of his power in creating the world (vs. 7).

Striking is pāda 6b, which says that Tvaṣṭar made Indra's mace "from every race," meaning from both gods and mortals, and "out of his knowledge," perhaps his knowledge of all creatures (cf. IV.42.3, cited by Geldner although to make a different point) or alternatively, "out of their possessions." That is to say, the weapon by which Indra performs his great deeds draws on the totality of humans and gods for its power. Oldenberg observed that the juxtaposition of the words *janúṣo védas* ("race… knowledge [/possession]") recalls the epithet

Jātavedas, which describes Agni as the continuous presence throughout the sacrificial day and the guarantor of the continuity of the human lineage. Perhaps this constitutes an oblique reference to the totality of gods and mortals that becomes Indra's weapon.

1. As did the Aṅgirases, chant this new (chant) to him, so that his explosive powers rise up as in ancient times
   when, through his strength and in the exhilaration of soma, he razed all the firmly fixed cow pens, enclosed on every side.
2. Let him (once again) become the one who, showing the measure of his power, crossed beyond greatness to obtain the first nurture.
   The champion, who girded his body in battles, fastened heaven in its greatness on his head.
3. Then you did the first, great heroic deed, when, at its beginning, you roused your explosive power through the poetic formulation.
   Spurred by the chariot-rider with his fallow bay horses, the lively (waters) flow forth separately toward the same goal.
4. Then he who grew strong over all the worlds by his greatness, acting as their master, projecting his youthful vitality,
   after that, (becoming a) draft-horse, he spanned the two world-halves with light; upon sewing up the bilious shades of darkness, he wrapped them all together.
5. Through his power, he fixed firmly the mountains sliding forward, and he made the labor of the waters to be sliding downward.
   He made fast the all-nurturing earth, and by his wiles he propped up the heaven (to keep it) from falling.
6. That was fit for him, for his two arms—what his father made from every race and out of his knowledge—
   that mace by which he, with mighty roar, smashed the worm and twisted it down to lie upon the earth.
7. Like a woman aging at home, remaining with her parents, from our common ritual seat, I beg you to be our Fortune.
   Make a visible sign, give us a measure, and bring it here. Give a portion to me myself by which you will show your readiness to give.
8. We would call upon you, Indra, to be our sustainer. You are the giver, Indra, of labors and of victory's prizes.
   Help us, Indra, with your shimmering help! Indra, you bull, make us better!
9. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
   Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.18 (209) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
9 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn centers on Indra's chariot, which, the poet hopes, will carry Indra to his sacrifice and not to the sacrifice of any of his rivals (vss. 3, 7). Indra's chariot is also the sacrifice itself. According to Sāyaṇa, its four yokes are the four soma-pressing stones; the three whips are the three pitches used in recitation; the seven reins are the seven meters; and—the least likely of Sāyaṇa's identifications—the ten oars are the ten planets "that rescue from evil beings" (etymologizing *arítra* "oar" as *ari* "enemy" + *trā* "rescue") or the ten Camasādhvaryus. In a lengthy note Witzel and Gotō suggest other possibilities for such numbers. With regard to the world, three may be the three worlds or the three positions of the sun, four the four directions, seven the seven rivers, and so on. In relation to the sacrifice, three might be the three sacrificial fires or the three soma cups, four (or four times four) the number of priests, seven the three (fires, cups) plus the four (priests) or the seven priests mentioned in II.5.2, ten the seven (priests) plus the three (fires, cups) or ten fingers, ten fires, ten soma vessels, et cetera. All that said, however, the specific identifications are less important than the possibility of finding many identifications and the generally increasing numbers (4, 3, 7, 10). These project a picture of the chariot as encompassing all aspects of the sacrifice and of the world.

Verse 2 begins with another enumeration. Here the first, second, and third might be the three soma offerings of the sacrificial day or the three fires of the sacrificial ground. The second half of verse 2 turns to a key moment in the sacrifice, the birth of Agni out of the fire-kindling stick. The newly born Agni keeps company with "the others," but once again who or what these others are is unclear: they might be the sacrificial fires, the sacrificial offerings, the gods, or even other priests. From verse 3 the poet's attention turns especially to Indra's chariot-horses, whose number progressively increases from two (vss. 3, 4) to a hundred (vs. 6). This increasing number suggests that these horses might correspond to an aspect of the sacrifice that carries Indra to the sacrificial area. For the poet there are few greater attractions for Indra than the ritual recitations, and therefore these horses may be the words of these recitations, which like these horses multiply as the hymn is recited. Note that *śaténa* "with a hundred" is the hundredth word of the hymn. Once again, however, the multiplication of horses is also an indication of the fluidity of this hymn's numerology and another signal that Indra's chariot comprehends the whole of the sacrifice and the world.

1. Early in the morning a new, victorious chariot is yoked up with four
      yokes, three whips, and seven reins.
   Having ten oars, the sun-winning (chariot) belonging to the sons of
      Manu becomes swift through our wishes and thoughts.

2. He is fit for him [=Indra] for the first time, for the second, for the third— he the Hotar of Manu [=Agni].
   Some [=priests] give birth (to him [=Agni]), the infant of another [=*ará̄ṇi* fem., the fire-kindling stick], and he keeps company with the others— he the noble bull.
3. Now I shall yoke the two fallow bays to Indra's chariot by a new, well-spoken speech in order that he come.
   Let other sacrificers—for inspired poets are many—not stop you in this.
4. With your two fallow bays, Indra, journey here, with your four and with your six, when you are summoned,
   with your eight and your ten, to the soma-drinking. Here is the pressed soma, generous one: do not disdain it.
5. Journey here, right nearby, with your twenty and your thirty, yoking up with your forty fallow bays,
   with your fifty pulling your good chariot, Indra, with your sixty and your seventy, to the soma-drinking.
6. Journey here, right nearby, with your eighty and your ninety, being conveyed by your hundred fallow bays,
   for here is your soma among the Śunahotras, Indra, which has been poured all around seeking you for your exhilaration.
7. Journey here to *my* poetic formulation, Indra. Put all the pairs of fallow bays on the yoke-pole of the chariot,
   for you have become the one to be competitively summoned in many places. In this soma-pressing, you warrior, find your exhilaration.
8. No one will keep my companionship away from Indra. The priestly gift should yield its milk to us.
   In his preeminent protection and in his hand, we would be those having victory in our every advance.
9. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
   Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.19 (210) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn invokes Indra in his many roles as a warrior. It begins with Indra's greatest deed, the destruction of Vr̥tra (vss. 2–4). Although the Vr̥tra story concerns

principally the release of the waters, verses 4–5 connect it also with the release of the sun, which takes place "in a single day." This may be a reference to the ritual day, since the Morning Pressing may be connected with the release of the dawns and the Midday Pressing with the release of the waters, or it may reflect the tendency elsewhere to fold the release of light into the effects of the Indra's victory over Vr̥tra (cf. I.32.4). The poet then evokes Indra's help for Kutsa and Divodāsa (vs. 6) before announcing that the Gr̥tsamadas, in exchange for their offerings, also deserve Indra's support in overcoming their enemies.

The hymn is dominated by racing imagery that describes both divine and human action. This imagery is reflected in Indra's deeds: the waters "charge forth" after Indra destroyed Vr̥tra (vs. 2), and Indra's horse Etaśa won wealth like the prize in a race (vs. 5). But it is reflected also in mortals' efforts: men contend to win the sun (vs. 4d), and the sacrificers strive to win as if in a race (vs. 7).

1. The drinking of this plant for exhilaration has begun, o men of inspired thought, (the drinking) of the delightful soma-pressing,
   at which Indra, having grown strong (thereby) from of old, has found a home, as have the men creating the poetic formulations.
2. Becoming exhilarated from this honey, Indra with the mace in his hand hewed apart the serpent blocking the flood,
   so that the rivers' pleasing offerings (of water) charged forth like birds toward rich fields.
3. That great Indra, smasher of the serpent, roused the flood of waters forth toward the sea.
   He gave birth to the sun and found the cattle. He perfected the patterns of the days through the night.
4. And he—(though) many and impregnable are (the obstacles) for Manu—serves his servant: he smashes Vr̥tra [/Obstacle]—
   he who in a single day became the unshakeable one for the men contending to win the sun.
5. Receiving praise, the god Indra ceded the sun to the soma-pressing mortal,
   when, doing service (to him), Etaśa bore him fault-concealing wealth like a share (of a stake).
6. In a single day, he subdued the voracious, barley-destroying Śuṣṇa for the charioteer Kutsa,
   and Indra razed the ninety and nine fortifications of Śambara for Divodāsa.
7. So we have sent to you our recitation, Indra. Like those seeking fame, racing by themselves for victory's prize,
   we would obtain the sevenfold (prize), panting after it. You will bend the weapon of the godless reviler.
8. So the Gr̥tsamadas have fashioned their thought for you, o champion, and the (ritual) patterns, like those seeking help.

Those creating the formulations, Indra, would obtain anew refreshment and nourishment, a good dwelling place, and your good favor.

9. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
   Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.20 (211) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except virāḍrūpā 3

This hymn contains a number of metrical peculiarities: verses 2c, 8b, and possibly 6d are one syllable short. On the other hand, the name "Indra"—and the poet draws attention to the name in verse 6—is clearly disyllabic only in the first and in the final verse. Everywhere else, a trisyllabic pronunciation will restore the meter. Again, the poet emphasizes this since in verses 2a, 3a, and 4a the vocative *indra*, nominative *índraḥ*, and accusative *índram*, all in the same metrical position, can be recited trisyllabically. There is also a double sandhi contraction in verse 2b, where *abhiṣṭipā́ḥ asi** > *abhiṣṭipā́si*. Verse 2b contains a *śleṣa,* in which the same word can function in two different roles, since *tvā́vataḥ* "such as you" can be both a genitive singular with "good favor" and an accusative plural modifying "men." Verse 2a has *ūtī́* for *ūtíbhiḥ*. None of these forms is unprecedented in the R̥gveda, but the persistent and deliberate use of such semi-irregularities suggests that the poet has a particular purpose in employing them. Perhaps he wished to call special attention to the inspired thinking and insight (vss. 1, 2), the praises and lauds (vss. 3, 4, 5, 7), and the poetic formulations (vss. 4, 5) of the poet by using words that would in some way call attention to themselves. It is these words that Indra "makes powerful" (vss. 5, 7).

The hymn ends by contrasting the poets and their people, whom Indra helps, to the Dāsas and Dasyus, whom he defeats. Again, there may be a suggestion that what differentiates the fates of the poets and their enemies is precisely the mastery that the former have over words.

The mythical references in 5cd are obscure, but they may have something to do with the conquest of darkness by light. If so, then they anticipate Indra's victory over the Dāsa fortresses "with their dark wombs" (vs. 7).

1. We bring forward vitality for you, Indra—know of us!—as one seeking victory's prize (brings forward) a chariot,
   as marveling we reflect through our inspired thinking and seek to obtain (both) the good favor of one such as you and men (such as you).

2. You, Indra, with your help are by your dominance the protector of us, the people devoted to you.
   You are the forceful guardian of the pious man, who, possessed of right insight, attains you.
3. Let that youth, Indra, who is invoked on every side, be for us a benevolent companion and protector of our men—
   he who with his help will lead forth the one reciting lauds, the one laboring, the one cooking and singing praises.
4. I shall praise him—Indra—I shall sing to him, alongside whom long ago they grew strong and exulted.
   Being implored, he carries to success the desire for the good thing, (that desire) of the present Āyu creating (these) poetic formulations.
5. Having found pleasure in the hymns of the Aṅgirases, Indra made their formulations powerful, sending them along their way.
   Robbing the dawns by means of the sun, receiving praise, he has pierced the primordial (establishments) even of the Devourer.
6. The god famed as Indra by name, he the most wondrous, rose upright for Manu.
   The able, independent one carried away the Dāsa Arśasāna's very own head.
7. Smasher of Vr̥tra, splitter of fortresses, Indra razed the Dāsa (fortresses) with their dark wombs.
   He gave birth to the earth and the waters for Manu. In every way he makes the sacrificer's laud powerful.
8. In every way might was conceded by the gods to him, to Indra, at the winning of the flood.
   When they put his mace in his arms, after smashing the Dasyu he trampled their metal fortresses.
9. Now should the generous priestly gift yield your boon for the singer as its milk, Indra.
   Exert yourself for the praise singers. Let fortune not pass us by. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.21 (212) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 6

In its first three verses the hymn announces the various offerings to Indra: the soma, the homage, and the proclamation of Indra's heroic deeds. The god merits these because of his overwhelming power to defeat any who stand in his way and to win

whatever he wishes. In verses 4–5, the poet recalls the Vala story, in which Indra and his priestly allies obtained the cattle and the dawns through the hymns that both the priests and Indra recite. He ends with an appeal that his people will find the intellectual ability that will allow them both to continue to implore the gods successfully and to gain the wealth and safety that will flow from that ability.

1. To him winning everything: winning the stakes, winning the sun; to him winning in every way, winning men, winning fields;
   to him winning horses, winning cattle, winning waters; to Indra, worthy of the sacrifice, bring his beloved soma.
2. To him dominating, breaking, conquering, to the never-overpowered, overpowering adept;
   to him, the powerfully spirited draft-horse, impossible to surpass; to him overpowering in every way—to Indra speak homage.
3. He, overpowering in every way, consuming the peoples, and overpowering the peoples; he, the fighter rousing to action, grown strong at his pleasure;
   he, punishing opposition, overcoming, and acknowledged among the clans—I shall proclaim Indra's heroic deeds that he has done.
4. The bull who cannot be pushed aside, the deadly blow against those raging; the deep and lofty one, whose verbal craft is unequalled;
   spurring on the weak, piercing, firmly set and wide—Indra, whose sacrifice is good, gives birth to the dawns and the sun.
5. By means of the sacrifice, the fire-priests of inspired thinking, crossing the waters, found for themselves a way, sending forth their insights.
   By their cry and assembly, seeking help (they obtained) cows; sending forth (their insights) to Indra, they obtained goods.
6. Indra, grant to us the best goods, the perception that belongs to (sacrificial) skill, and the possession of a good share,
   as well as a prospering of our riches, freedom from harm for our bodies, sweetness of our speech, and the blessing of good days for our days.

II.22 (213) Indra

Gr̥tsamada
4 verses: aṣṭi 1, atiśakvarī 2–3, atiśakvarī or aṣṭi 4

The theme of the hymn is the bond between Indra and the soma, which enables Indra to perform "his great deed," the destruction of the serpent, the "worm," Vr̥tra. The god Soma ever accompanies the god Indra, and the refrain running through the first three verses emphasizes their connection by referring to Soma as *índu*, "(soma-)drop," echoing the name "Indra." By describing both Soma and

Indra as "real" (*satyá*), the poet reminds his hearers that just as soma was real when it was prepared by the gods for Indra before he destroyed Vr̥tra, so also it is real now in the present sacrifice, as is Indra himself.

1. Among the Trikadrukas [=the Maruts?], the buffalo, snorting mightily,
   drank to his satisfaction the barley-mixed soma pressed by Viṣṇu, (as much) as he wished.
   It exhilarated the great and broad one to do his great deed.
   – The god attends upon the god—the real Indu upon the real Indra.
2. Then through his power, the fiery one dominated the worm in battle.
   By his greatness, he filled the two world-halves and grew stronger.
   He received the other in his belly, and there was more (soma) left over.
   – The god attends upon the god—the real Indu upon the real Indra.
3. Born at once with resolve, at once with power, you increased—
   you, grown strong at once with heroic powers, overpowering the scorners, and knowing no boundaries,
   you, the giver of bounty to him who sings praises, (the giver of) the desirable good.
   – The god attends upon the god—the real Indu upon the real Indra.
4. This manly deed of yours, o dancing Indra, the foremost work done by you, is to be proclaimed early in the day—
   that by the power of a god you let life flow forward by letting the waters flow.
   He will overcome every godless one by his strength. He of a hundred resolves will find nourishment; he will find refreshment.

II.23 (214) Br̥haspati

Gr̥tsamada
19 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15, 19

The relation between the god Br̥haspati and Indra is fluid within the R̥gveda. As Schmidt (1968) has demonstrated, *bŕ̥haspáti* and *bráhmanas páti* "lord of the sacred formulation" are usually names of Indra in the context of the Vala myth. At times, however, Br̥haspati emerges as an independent deity, though closely linked to Indra. Here the poet once describes Br̥haspati as the "yokemate" of Indra (vs. 18), but beyond this statement, there is otherwise little to distinguish Indra and Br̥haspati.

Framing the hymn's description of Br̥haspati are overt references to the Vala myth, in which Indra as Br̥haspati leads the Aṅgirases and, by the power of their song, opens the cave that releases the cattle and dawns (vss. 2, 3, 18). The intermediate verses expand the theme of the power of the verbal formulation, of which Br̥haspati is the master. It is by means of knowledge of the truth that Br̥haspati

and the poet, who possesses mastery of the truth through Bṛhaspati, are able to overcome their enemies. They defeat scorners (vs. 8), slighters (vs. 13), chatterers (vs. 14), and speakers of ill (vs. 10). They overcome those who hate the real formulations of the truth (vs. 4), who lay snares (vs. 6), and who are deceitful (vss. 5, 16, 17). Perhaps because of his powerful speech, Bṛhaspati's mouth even "snaps at" the poet's enemies (vs. 9). At least in some instances, the rivals of the poet are rival sacrificers. At best, however, these know the words to recite, but not the truth that produces the songs or that lies behind them (vs. 16). Through the truth and the truth formulations, the poet and his people are freed from distress (vs. 4), hostility (vss. 5, 9), and injury (vss. 7, 8, 12) and instead prosper (vss. 10, 15).

1. We call upon you, the troop-lord of troops, the most famous poet of poets,
   the preeminent king of sacred formulations, o lord of the sacred formulation. Hearing us, sit down upon your seat together with your help.
2. Even the prescient gods attained their sacrificial portion from you, lordly Bṛhaspati.
   As the great sun is (the begetter) of ruddy dawn through its light, you are the very begetter of all formulations.
3. Having pressed away evasive chatter and darkness, you mount truth's light-bearing chariot,
   which terrifies, which vanquishes enemies, o Bṛhaspati, and which smashes demons, splits cowpens, and finds the sun.
4. You guide with good guidance, and you rescue the man who will do (ritual) service for you. Distress will not reach him.
   Confounding his fury, you are the scorcher of him who hates the sacred formulation. Bṛhaspati, great is that greatness of yours.
5. Neither distress nor difficulty from anywhere overcomes him, nor hostilities nor the duplicitous ones.
   You press away all that harms from him whom you protect as his good herdsman, o lord of the sacred formulation.
6. You are our herdsman, creating paths and seeing afar. We are awake to your command with our thoughts.
   Bṛhaspati, let grasping disaster, rightfully his, grind to pieces him who sets a snare for us.
7. Or if a hostile mortal, a lone wolf, is about to injure us who are without offense,
   Bṛhaspati, turn him away from our path. Make an easy way for this our pursuit of the gods.
8. We call upon you as the rescuer of our bodies, as our defender who inclines toward us, o deliverer.
   Bṛhaspati, lay low those who scorn the gods. Let evil-doers not gain higher favor.

9. Through you growing very strong, o lord of the sacred formulation, we would receive the eagerly sought goods belonging to the sons of Manu.
   The hostilities that loom over us from afar or hard by—snap at these, (now) profitless.
10. Through you, o Bṛhaspati, we would receive the utmost vigor—you, our providing, winning yokemate.
    Let not the speaker of ill, trying to deceive, be master of us. As speakers of good, we would advance through our thoughts.
11. You are a bull unable to be pushed aside, going toward a challenge, scorcher of his rival and overwhelming in battles,
    the real redeemer of debts, o lord of the sacred formulation, and the tamer even of the powerful one, excited to tough resistance.
12. Who, through his godless thinking, intends harm and, thinking himself powerful in his commands, tries to smash us—
    o Bṛhaspati, let his deadly weapon not reach us and let us thwart the fury of the evil-doer who vaunts himself.
13. Who is to be invoked in raids and to be approached with reverence, who goes among the prizes of victory and wins every stake,
    Bṛhaspati has ripped apart all the stranger's slights that strive to deceive, like (enemies') chariots.
14. With your sharpest scorching, scorch the demons who have put you of manifest heroism to scorn.
    Reveal that of yours which will be worthy of a hymn. Shake evasive chatter to pieces, Bṛhaspati.
15. Bṛhaspati! That which will be worth more than what belongs to the stranger, (that which) will radiate among the peoples with brilliance and purpose,
    and that which will shine by means of your power, o you born through the truth—set that shimmering possession among us.
16. (Give) us not to thieves, the cheats, lurking in the track of deceit, who have become greedy for our supplies
    and (who) declare the crushing power of the gods (but set it) aside in their heart. Bṛhaspati, they do not know (anything) beyond the sāman-chant (itself).
17. Since the sage Tvaṣṭar gave birth to you from all beings and from each sāman-chant,
    so then (you), as the lord of the sacred formulation, are the collector of debts and redeemer of debts, and the smasher of deceit in your upholding of the great truth.
18. The mountain gaped open for (their) glory to be yours when, Aṅgiras, you set loose the cowpen of cows.
    With Indra as your yokemate, Bṛhaspati, you forced out the flood of waters, enclosed by darkness.

19. Lord of the sacred formulation, become the guide of this hymn and give life to our lineage.
 All that is fortunate which the gods aid. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.24 (215) Bṛhaspati

Gṛtsamada
16 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12, 16

As Schmidt (1968: 230–37) points out in his translation and extensive analysis of this hymn, the poet frames his hymn with references to the Vala myth in verses 2–7 and 14. The poet does expand the scope of the myth, however, since the cave contains not only cattle (vss. 3, 14), but also the sun (vss. 3, 9) and honey and water (vs. 4). In verses 3 and 14 the cows likely refer also to the dawns. Inside of this frame, the poet describes the present, in which Bṛhaspati inspires the sacrificial hymns and receives the sacrificial offerings. These present events are partly blended with mythical ones. In verse 8, for example, the present hymns created by Bṛhaspati are his arrows, but this description of words as arrows recalls the ancient heroic deeds of Bṛhaspati and Indra. More explicitly, in verse 9cd Bṛhaspati's victory causes the sun to blaze, which echoes the release of the dawns in the Vala myth. And in verse 10 both gods and humans receive nourishment through the ritual offerings and the goods won by him.

This blending of the mythic and the present may also occur in the opening verses of the hymn. Where later verses refer to the present but echo the past, in verses 2–7 the overtly mythic events occasionally suggest present ritual acts. In verse 4 the cistern "containing streams of honey," which Bṛhaspati opens and from which all living beings drink, recalls the ritual cups with their soma-honey. Priests are the heroes of the battle in verses 6 and 7, and again this recalls the present ritual action of priests. Such double reference may contribute to the obscurity of the most difficult verse in the hymn, verse 5. A number of interpreters, such as Witzel and Gotō, understand pādas ab to mean that from ancient times "these beings," either the waters or the cattle, were destined to come forth, but for a long time the door was shut on them. That is to say, the basic reference is to the Vala myth, as in its surrounding verses. On one level, this interpretation is surely right: there likely is a reference to the Vala myth. At the same time, the poet's extraordinary obscurity suggests that he may have more in mind, and indeed pāda a explicitly connects past and present. The verse may suggest the idea that what has happened in the past happens again, and therefore the action of Bṛhaspati is again necessary to free the cattle or the waters.

1. Help this offering, since you are its master—with this new, great song we would make the ritual distribution—
 and, Bṛhaspati, bring our thought to success, so that your companion [=Indra], who grants rewards to us, will be praised.

2. Who bent down by his power the things that had to be bent and split apart the things of Śambara by his fury,
   the lord of the sacred formulation moved the immovable forward, and he entered into and throughout the mountain filled with goods.
3. That had to be done by the foremost god of gods: what was firm became loose, what was hard became pliant.
   He drove up the cattle; he split the cave by the sacred formulation. He hid the darkness and made the sun visible.
4. The cistern with its mouth of stone, containing streams of honey, which the lord of the sacred formulation drilled out by his power—
   from that all those who see the sun have drunk. Copiously and all at once, they poured out the water-filled well.
5. All those beings of long ago, whoever they be, are to come to be (again). Through months and years they [=hinderers] block the doors for all of you.
   The two [=the sun and moon], not lining up (next to each other), move to one (pattern) or the other, to the patterns (of light and dark) that the lord of the sacred formulation has made.
6. These knowing (poets), who, upon reaching (there), reached the Paṇis' most distant treasury, hidden away,
   after observing the (Paṇis') untruths again, went up to enter there from where they came.
7. The truth-possessing poets, after observing the (Paṇis') untruths again, from there mounted the great paths.
   They (mounted) the fire, fanned by arms, within the stone. It [=the fire] is not one foreign (to them), for they left it behind.
8. The lord of the sacred formulation with his swift bow whose string is truth—where he wishes, there he reaches.
   To him belong the straight-flying arrows [=the hymns] with which he shoots—(arrows) to be seen, drawing the gaze of men, and whose womb is the ear.
9. Placed to the fore, he who leads together and leads apart, he who is well praised—he is the lord of the sacred formulation in battle.
   When the penetrating one bears away the prize and the stakes through his thinking, just then does the blazing sun blaze at will.
10. Far-going and fore-going is the first (gift) of him who gives abundantly. The things easily found by Br̥haspati are to be realized.
    These are the things won by the intent seer, the prize-winner, through whom both races [=gods and humans], their clans, find satisfaction.
11. Far-going everywhere within the lower settlement [=among humans], you, who are great and joy-bringing, increase in power—
    the god spreads out widely before the gods; the lord of the sacred formulation encompasses all those things.

12. All that is real belongs just to you two, o generous ones. Even the waters do not confound your commandment.
    O Indra, o lord of the sacred formulation, do you two come here to our offering, like two prize-winning yokemates to their food.
13. Also the swiftest draft-horses obey him. In the public hall the inspired poet bears away the stakes through his thinking.
    Hating the hard and collecting the debt according to his will is he, the lord of the sacred formulation, the prizewinner in the contest.
14. The battle-fury of the lord of the sacred formulation, who will do the great deed, became real according to his will:
    He who drove the cattle up also distributed them to heaven. Like a great stream, (the stream of cattle) ran in separate ways through his power.
15. O lord of the sacred formulation, may we be the charioteers of easily controlled, vigorous wealth throughout all our days.
    Mix heroes among heroes for us, when, being the master through my formulation, you pursue my call.
16. O lord of the sacred formulation, become the guide of this hymn and give life to our lineage.
    All that is fortunate which the gods aid. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.25 (216) Brahmaṇaspati

Gr̥tsamada
5 verses: jagatī

The focus of this hymn is identified in the refrain found in all five verses: the mortal who is in the favor of Brahmaṇaspati, the lord of the sacred formulation. The first three-quarters of each verse then specifies the ways in which this mortal thrives, especially in winning battles and besting his enemies. The first hemistich of the first verse makes it clear that the fortunate man in question has won the favor of Brahmaṇaspati by ritual activity, and especially by making his own sacred formulations (*bráhman*), though the ritual context is not mentioned again.

1. Kindling the fire, he will win against those who seek to win. Just he by whom the sacred formulations are made and by whom the oblations are bestowed will swell with strength.
   With his offspring he keeps extending himself beyond the offspring (of others)—whomever the lord of the sacred formulation makes his own yokemate.

2. With his heroes he will win against the heroes who seek to win. With his cows he will expand his wealth. He (thus) attends to himself,
   and his progeny and posterity increase—whomever the lord of the sacred formulation makes his own yokemate.
3. Vehement like a river in its surge, with his might he asserts his will over those who seek to act with balls, like a bull over castrated steers.
   Like the onslaught of fire he is not to be obstructed—whomever the lord of the sacred formulation makes his own yokemate.
4. The heavenly (waters), never drying up, stream to him. As the first, he goes with his warriors to (the contests for) cows.
   Having power that cannot be blunted, he strikes with might—whomever the lord of the sacred formulation makes his own yokemate.
5. Just to him do all the rivers roar. They have provided many unbroken shelters.
   In the favor of the gods, having good fortune, he blazes forth—whomever the lord of the sacred formulation makes his own yokemate.

II.26 (217) Brahmaṇaspati

Gr̥tsamada
4 verses: jagatī

The subject of this hymn is very similar to that of the preceding (II.25)—the ways in which a mortal favored by Brahmaṇaspati will prosper—and the same phrase "he will win against those who seek to win" (*vanavad vanuṣyatáḥ*) found in the first pāda of each hymn signals their relationship. However, II.26 lacks the refrain found in II.25, and it also varies the 3rd-person description of the favored mortal with a 2nd-person address to the same mortal in verse 2. The series of abrupt imperatives in that verse enlivens the hymn.

Unlike II.25, where the importance of ritual activity is established in the first half-verse but not mentioned again, this hymn constantly emphasizes the power that the performance of the sacrifice gives to the sacrificer, in contrast to the impious man, who is weaker by nature, even if he is a good warrior.

1. Just he *whose laud is straight (on target) will win against those who seek to win. Just he who is devoted to the gods will dominate the one not devoted to the gods.
   Just he who pursues (his ritual duties) well will win against the one difficult to surpass in battles. As sacrificer, he will apportion out the sustenance of the non-sacrificer.
2. Perform the sacrifice for yourself, hero. Pursue those who display their zeal. Set your mind well on the overcoming of obstacles.

Make offering so that you will have good fortune. We choose the help of the lord of the sacred formulation.

3. Just he with his people, he with his clan, he with his race, he with his sons bears away the prize of victory, the spoils, with his superior men,
   who, with a mind of trust (in ritual hospitality), seeks to attract the father of the gods, the lord of the sacred formulation, with his oblation.
4. Whoever has done honor to him with ghee-drenched oblations, that one does the lord of the sacred formulation lead to the fore.
   He makes a wide place for him from narrow straits; he protects him from harm—the unerring one who creates a wide place for him even from narrow straits.

II.27 (218) Ādityas

Gr̥tsamada or Kūrma Gārtsamada
17 verses: triṣṭubh

The first part of the hymn (vss. 1–7) calls on the Ādityas for protection against all sorts of dangers encountered during journeys to settlements and between settlements. They have the power to protect because they are gods who govern the world and the heavens according to the truth, which defines the order and nature of things as they are and ought to be (vss. 8–10). The poet then returns once more to the theme of a journey protected by the Ādityas and looks forward to his finding a place to settle, a place of good pasturage (vs. 13) and a place that is open and secure (vs. 14). The poet insists that he is worthy of the Ādityas' protection: like the gods themselves (vss. 2, 9), he is *śúci* "gleaming, pure" (vs. 13), free of any taint. And if he has committed any offense, he begs the Ādityas' mercy (vs. 14) and hopes that he would never fall to the punishments of the Ādityas (vs. 16). The meaning of verse 15cd is not quite clear. The two dwelling places mentioned there could be heaven and earth, to which pādas ab refer, or possibly, as Geldner suggests, to opposing sides from whose conflict the poet hopes to benefit.

1. These ghee-backed songs I pour out to the Ādityas, kings from of old, with my tongue (as offering ladle).
   Let each one hear us: Mitra, Aryaman, and Bhaga, mighty-born Varuṇa, Dakṣa, and Aṃśa.
2. Today, they of common resolve—Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa—will enjoy this praise song of mine—
   they, the gleaming Ādityas, pure as a stream (of soma) and free of crookedness, disgrace, or injury.

3. These broad and deep Ādityas, undeceivable but ready to deceive (the deceitful), having many eyes,
   see within the crooked and the straight. Everything is in front of the kings, even the farthest things.
4. The Ādityas sustain what moves and what stands still—(these) gods, the herdsmen of the whole living world,
   they of far-reaching care, guarding their lordship, possessing the truth, and collecting debts.
5. Might I know this help of yours, o Ādityas, which even in time of fear is joy, o Aryaman.
   Under the leadership of you all, o Mitra and Varuṇa, might I avoid difficulties like clefts in the earth.
6. Since easy is your path, o Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa—harmless to men and leading straight—
   therefore speak in our defense, Ādityas. Offer us protection impossible to smash on any side.
7. Let Aditi, whose sons are kings, and Aryaman help us cross beyond hostilities by easy (paths).
   We would draw near to the lofty protection of Mitra and Varuṇa, as those with many heroes and free of injury.
8. They uphold the three earths and the three heavens. Three are their commandments within the ritual distribution.
   By truth is your greatness great, Ādityas. That is dear (to you), o Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa.
9. They uphold the three heavenly realms of light—(themselves) golden, gleaming, and pure as a stream (of soma).
   (They are) unsleeping, unwinking, undeceivable, and widely proclaimed for the straightforward mortal.
10. You are the king of all, Varuṇa, both gods and mortals, o lord.
    Give us a hundred autumns to gaze far. We would reach the secure lifetimes of former times.
11. I see far neither to the right nor to the left, neither forward nor behind, Ādityas.
    Be it in naïveté or in wisdom, you good ones, led by you, might I attain the light free from fear.
12. Who has served the kings leading by truth [=the Ādityas] and whom they—and his own prosperity—make strong,
    he travels by chariot as the foremost man of wealth, proclaimed at the ritual distributions as the giver of goods.
13. Gleaming and undeceivable, he dwells near waters that provide good pasturage, with his own vigor strengthened and with his good heroes.
    Neither from near nor from afar do any strike down the man who comes to be under the leadership of the Ādityas.

14. O Aditi, Mitra, and Varuṇa, have mercy if we have committed any offense against you.
    Might I reach the broad light that is free of fear, Indra. Let the long darkness (of death) not reach us.
15. Both (heaven and earth) jointly make heaven's rain swell for him: (he is) Subhaga, the "Man of Good Fortune," by name, the one who thrives.
    Conquering both dwelling places, he drives amid the battles. Both sides are straightforward for him.
16. O Ādityas, worthy of the sacrifice, your wiles that are ready for the deceitful one, your unbound fetters ready for the cheat—
    like a horseman, might I travel in my chariot beyond these! Might we never be harmed under your wide protection!
17. Let me not find the lack of a dear benefactor, of a friend with many gifts, o Varuṇa.
    Let me not stand down from wealth easy to control, o king. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.28 (219) Varuṇa

Gr̥tsamada or Kūrma Gārtsamada
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This is the only hymn to Varuṇa alone in Maṇḍala II, but it resembles the famous Varuṇa hymns of book VII (86–89), especially in its confessional tone and its plea to escape punishment from the god. The ellipses in the first verse point to Varuṇa's double role in this hymn. "This belonging to the Āditya sage poet" is in the first instance the hymn itself that is being recited for the god. The poet hopes that his hymn will dominate all things, or, perhaps better, be dominant over all other hymns. At the same time, "this" is also the god's own commandment, which the poet describes in the hymn and which dominates everything in the world. Varuṇa's function as a speaker is underscored by the description of him as a *kaví* "sage poet" since a *kaví* is one who knows and who speaks, and as *mandrá* "pleasing," which frequently characterizes the Hotar priest, who recites the hymns. Verse 2 carries forward the argument, mentioning both the commandment of the god and the insights of the poet. The poet calls upon Varuṇa to keep him safe from various threats (vss. 3, 6, 10), interspersing his petition with pleas not to fall victim to the punishment from the god for his misdeeds (vss. 5, 7, 9). Toward the end of the hymn, the poet once again calls attention both to his own speech and also to the commandment spoken by the god (vs. 8), thus returning to the initial theme of the hymn.

1. Let this belonging to the Āditya sage poet, the independent king, dominate all existing things in its greatness—

(this belonging to) the god who excels as the pleasing one for the sacrifice. I beg good renown of abundant Varuṇa.

2. Might we be possessed of good fortune under your commandment, since with great attention we have recited your praises, Varuṇa,
(now) at the approach of the cattle-rich dawns, since we are awakening like fires throughout the days.

3. Might we be under the protection of you, who bring many heroes, who receive wide praise, o Varuṇa, our leader.
O undeceivable sons of Aditi, indulge us to be yoked (with you), o gods.

4. As their distributor, the Āditya sent them gushing forth: the rivers move to the truth of Varuṇa.
These do not weary, nor are they unharnessed. Like birds they have flown swiftly on their earth-encircling course.

5. Loosen my offense from me like a halter. We would succeed in reaching the wellspring of your truth, Varuṇa.
Let my thread not be cut as I weave my insight. Let not the full measure of my work be broken before its season.

6. Unfasten fear from me, o Varuṇa! Hold me close, o truth-possessing, universal king!
Like a rope from a calf, untie confining straits (from me), for I cannot be away from you even for the blink of an eye.

7. (Strike) us not with your deadly weapons, o Varuṇa, which, in your hunt (for him), injure the one who commits an offense, o lord!
Let us not go from light into foreign lands! Loosen our lapses for us to live!

8. Before, Varuṇa, and also now, and in the future, we will speak our homage to you, o you who are mighty-born,
for on you, as on a mountain, there rest immovable commandments, o you who are difficult to deceive.

9. Send my debts far away and (other) things done by me. Let me not suffer for what was done by another, o king.
Surely many more dawns have not yet dawned: direct us, Varuṇa, (in order to be) alive at them.

10. If in a dream one who is yoked with me or who is my companion speaks a frightening thing to me, who become fearful, o king,
or if a thief or a wolf tries to deceive us—protect us from (all) that, Varuṇa.

11. Let me not find the lack of a dear benefactor, of a friend with many gifts, o Varuṇa.
Let me not descend from wealth easy to control, o king. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.29 (220) All Gods

Gr̥tsamada or Kūrma Gārtsamada
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet calls on various gods, especially the Ādityas, for protection from perils, some vividly imagined, and for forgiveness for his previous offenses. The poet does not seem entirely confident that his prayers will be answered.

1. You vigorous Ādityas of steadfast commandments, put at a distance from me my offense, as a woman who gives birth in secret (does her baby).
   You who listen, Varuṇa, Mitra, (other) gods—knowing what is favorable, I call to you for aid.
2. You, gods, are solicitude; you are strength; you—keep hatreds far away.
   As apportioners, be indulgent and be merciful to us, both today and for the future.
3. What shall we do now with your future (friendship), what, good ones, with your old friendship?
   You—Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aditi, Indra and the Maruts—establish well-being for us.
4. Hail, gods: only you are our friends. Be merciful to me who am in need.
   Let our chariot not come to be without you when it is travelling in the middle (of battle/a journey?); let us not become weary while we have friends like you.
5. I alone have perpetrated a great offense against you, for which you have chastised me, like a father (his son, who is) a gambler.
   In the distance (be) your fetters, in the distance evils, o gods; do not seize me in my son, like a bird.
6. Become inclined our way today, you who are worthy of the sacrifice. Being fearful, I would fasten onto your heart.
   Rescue us, gods, from the "rubbing out" of the wolf; rescue us from falling into the pit, you who are worthy of the sacrifice.
7. Let me not find the lack of a dear benefactor, of a friend with many gifts, o Varuṇa.
   Let me not stand down from wealth easy to control, o king. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.30 (221) Indra (1–5, 7, 8cd, 10), Indra and Soma (6), Sarasvatī (8ab), Bṛhaspati (9), Maruts (11)

Gṛtsamada
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 11

Despite the number and variety of divine dedicands in the Anukramaṇī ascription reproduced above, this is essentially an All God hymn, dominated by Indra. It appears between two All God hymns, although in its number of verses (eleven), it is out of order, since both II.29 and II.31 have seven verses. There is no easy way to adjust this discrepancy.

The first part of the hymn (vss. 1–3) presents, however obliquely, the story of the Indra–Vṛtra battle, but it leads up to the battle with a timeless or contemporary image. It describes the current daily rushing of waters (waters implicitly identified, as commonly, with the dawns), and then asks when the waters first began to surge. The unexpressed answer is—only when they were released after Indra's defeat of Vṛtra. Verse 2 has been interpreted in multiple ways, and many difficulties remain. Interestingly, it contains the first and almost the only example of a conditional verb in Vedic, and the isolation of this grammatical form makes the interpretation of the verse more difficult. In the tentative interpretation given here, the verse concerns an unidentified figure (possibly Sūrya, who is sometimes an opponent of Indra), who was planning to give aid to Vṛtra in the battle (pāda a), but (pāda b) his plan was detected and announced by an unidentified female figure (possibly Earth, possibly Indra's mother) to yet another unidentified figure (possibly Indra), thus foiling the plan. The verse pivots in pāda c, which can have reference both to the mythological past—the free flowing of the waters after their release on the killing of Vṛtra and their creation of paths for Indra—and to the timeless daily round—the continual (re-)creation of paths for the sun by the dawns, since the formula in 2c is also sometimes used exactly of this situation. Thus the second half of verse 2 returns us to the timeless daily realm of verse 1 and the double interpretation of waters and dawns. The third and last verse about the Vṛtra battle (vs. 3) is much more straightforward, and may have been designed to resolve for the audience what the topic of the first two, obscurely phrased, verses was.

The rest of the hymn begs the gods, particularly Indra but, as the hymn progresses, other gods, to use the same powers that led to victory in the Vṛtra battle to combat the poet's enemies. The importance of sacrifice in winning the gods' favor is emphasized in verses 6–7.

The hymn contains some striking expressions, for instance the "night" of the waters in verse 1: the image evoked may be a naturalistic one, that waters in full flow can appear dark, but with the identification waters = dawns the image can also describe the progress from night/darkness to dawn. Note also that the phrase "every day" defines the hymn as a ring composition, though it has different lexical realizations in verse 1 (*áhar-ahar*) and as the last word of the last verse 11 (*divé-dive*).

1. For the god who creates truth, for Savitar, for Indra who smashes the serpent, the waters do not stay still.
   Day after day the "night" of the waters drives on. How long ago was their first surging?
2. The one [=Sūrya?] who was going to carry the gear here for Vr̥tra—the mother [Earth? Indra's mother?] announced him to the knowing one [=Indra?].
   Excavating the paths for him [=Indra/Sūrya] at their pleasure, the boisterous ones [=dawns as waters] go every day to their goal.
3. For he took his stand, erect, in the midspace. Then he bore his murderous weapon down toward Vr̥tra.
   Clothing himself in mist, he [=Vr̥tra] ran up to him. Having sharp weapons Indra conquered his rival.
4. O Br̥haspati, with searing heat, as if with a stone, pierce the heroes of the (rival) lord, with their wolfish gait.
   Just as you also smote boldly before, so smite *our* rival, o Indra.
5. Hurl down from heaven the stone on high, with which you, exulting (in soma), will rub out your rival.
   After that go halves with us in the winning of progeny, of abundant descendants, and of cattle, o Indra.
6. For you two rip away the resolve (of him) whom you combat, but you are stimulators of (even) a feeble man who performs sacrifice.
   You, Indra and Soma—help us. In this fearful place create wide space.
7. It will not tire nor weary me, and there will be no flagging. We will not say, "Don't press soma (for him [=Indra],)"
   (Indra,) who will grant to me, who will give, who will be attentive, who will approach me with cows, as I press it.
8. You, Sarasvatī—help us. As a bold one accompanied by the Maruts, conquer the rivals.
   Even this vaunting one, the bull of the Śaṇḍikas, displaying his power, does Indra smash.
9. Whoever, distant or (near), wishes to harm us, on catching sight of him, pierce him with a sharp (weapon).
   Br̥haspati, with your weapons conquer the rivals. Deliver to deceit him who does harm, o king.
10. With our warriors, our champions, o champion, do the manly deeds that are yours to be done.
    For a long time they have been "besmoked" [=befuddled]. Having smashed them, bring their goods to us here.
11. Seeking favor, I address this Marutian troop for you with a hymn, with reverence I address the divine folk,
    so that we will attain wealth consisting of hale heroes, bringing descendants in its train, worthy of fame from day to day.

II.31 (222) All Gods

Gṛtsamada
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7

The common identification of the sacrifice, and particularly the praise hymn at the sacrifice, with a chariot in a race is the backgrounded theme of this hymn, which becomes foregrounded in the final verse. The controlling chariot image in turn gives rise to other comparisons, as when in verse 1 charioteers sitting on the wooden chariot are compared with birds sitting in trees.

The word "those seeking fame" (*śravasyávaḥ*) defines the hymn as a ring composition, as it occurs in both the initial and final verses, and the middle verses, 3–5, all open with *utá syá* [/*tyá*] "and this," a cluster that marks a simple omphalos. Though most of the hymn is relatively straightforward, the end of the final omphalos verse, 5d, is difficult and has elicited several different interpretations.

The designation "all gods" as the dedicand of the hymn is quite accurate: a wide variety of gods and divinized powers are addressed in the hymn and begged for help.

1. Help the chariot belonging to us, o Mitra and Varuṇa, in partnership with the Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus,
   when those seeking fame, excited, sitting on/in wood, fly forth like birds from their dwelling.
2. Then help out our chariot, you gods of one accord, as it seeks prizes among the clans,
   when the swift ones, crossing through the airy realm with their strides, keep trampling on the back of the earth with their forefeet.
3. And this Indra, belonging to all domains, of good resolve, with the Marutian troop of heaven
   will stand beside our chariot with help that keeps the wolf away, for great gain, to win the prizes.
4. And this god, the conqueror of the world, Tvaṣṭar, in concert with the Wives (of the Gods), will speed the chariot—
   Iḍā, Bhaga, Bṛhaddivā, and Rodasī; Pūṣan, Plenitude—and the Aśvins as husbands.
5. And these two well-portioned goddesses of opposite appearance, Dawn and Night, also speeders of moving creatures, (will speed the chariot),
   when, (o Heaven and) Earth, I will praise you two with a newer speech, I possessing triple vigor to strew vigor as the underlayer for the still (world).
6. And we want a laud for you like that of the fire-priests. Ahi Budhnya, Aja Ekapad, and
   Trita, the Master of the Ṛbhus, and Savitar take delight, also the Child of the Waters who impels the swift (horses), through (our) thought and labor.
7. I want these (words) raised up for you, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice. The Āyus fashioned (them) together into a newer (hymn).

Seeking fame, desiring the prize, like a chariot span might they attain the
visionary thought.

II.32 (223) Various Gods

Gr̥tsamada
8 verses: jagatī 1–5, anuṣṭubh 6–8

This is a composite hymn, whose structure is not entirely clear. The first three verses seem to belong together, addressing first Heaven and Earth (vs. 1) and then an unidentified male divinity (2–3), while the remaining five verses are addressed to various female divinities who are especially concerned with childbirth. However, the metrical structure does not accord with the conceptual structure, as the meter divides the hymn into verses 1–5 and 6–8.

1. O Heaven and Earth, become the helpers of this speech for me, who am acting according to truth and seeking to gain.
   You two whose lifetime is extended do I, seeking goods, greatly install here in front, when you are approached with praise.
2. Let secret swindles not deceive us on the day of Āyu [=offering day?]. Do not make us subject to these misfortunes.
   Do not keep us far away from your companionship. Know this (speech?) of ours. With a mind seeking favor we beseech you for this.
3. With a mind without anger bring here your attentive hearing, a swelling cow who gives milk, inexhaustible.
   With steps [/(verses measured) in feet] and with speech I impel you, the swift prize-winner, through all the days, o much invoked one.
4. Rākā who is good to invoke I invoke with good praise. Let her of good portion hear us; let her attend (to us) in person.
   Let her stitch her work with a needle that cannot be broken. Let her give a hero with a hundred shares who is worthy of hymns.
5. O Rākā, your benevolent thoughts, well-ornamented, with which you give goods to the pious one—
   with those approach us today, benevolently, granting thousandfold thriving, you of good portion.
6. O Sinīvalī with broad braids, you who are sister of the gods,
   enjoy the oblation that is poured. Allot offspring to us, goddess.
7. She who has lovely arms, lovely fingers, bearing easily, bearing amply,
   to her, mistress of the clan, to Sinīvalī, pour an oblation.
8. Guṅgū, Sinīvalī, Rākā, Sarasvatī—
   (on them and) on Indrāṇī I have called for help and on Varuṇānī for well-being.

II.33 (224) Rudra

Gṛtsamada
15 verses: triṣṭubh

Although under his transferred epithet Śiva ("kindly one"), Rudra has a grand career ahead of him in post-Vedic Hinduism, his role in Vedic, especially early Vedic, is relatively restrained. Only three complete Ṛgvedic hymns are dedicated to him (I.114 and VII.46, in addition to this one, as well as two hymns conjointly dedicated to Rudra and Soma, I.43 and VI.74). He is known especially as the father of the Maruts, and he has a dual nature: on the one hand, he is prone to anger and quick to dispatch his weapons, especially his arrows, at those who enrage him; on the other, he is a provider of healing remedies and of good luck.

The major part of this hymn is devoted to begging the god Rudra for his indulgence and his healing powers, but it also nervously expresses the hope that his vengeful assaults will be directed elsewhere. The dual nature of Rudra as both healer and avenger is thus on display, and his parentage of the Maruts begins the hymn (vs. 1) and is mentioned several times in the course of it.

1. Let your favor come here, o father of the Maruts. Do not keep us away from the sight of the sun.
   The hero on horseback should be indulgent. Might we be further propagated through our offspring, Rudra.
2. Through the remedies given by you that bring best luck, Rudra, might I reach a hundred winters.
   Banish hatred away from us, very far away, distress away, and afflictions away, widely scattered.
3. In glory you are the most glorious of anyone born, Rudra, the most powerful of the powerful, o you with the mace in your arms.
   Take us across to the far shore of distress, to well-being. Keep away all assaults of malady.
4. Let us not anger you, Rudra, through our acts of reverence, nor through poor praise, nor through an invocation shared (with other gods), o bull.
   Set up our heroes with your remedies: I hear that you are the best healer of healers.
5. Whoever invokes him with invocations and offerings, (thinking,) "With my praises might I cut off Rudra as my own exclusive portion,"
   to the zeal (of this person) let the red-brown one with powerful lips [=Rudra] not subordinate us—(Rudra) being tender-hearted and easy to invoke.

6. The bull, in the company of the Maruts, roused me up when I was in need, with his more energetic vitality.
   Free of malady, might I reach (this), like shade during the heat: might I attract here the favor of Rudra.
7. Where, o Rudra, is that merciful hand of yours, which is a healing remedy,
   the bearer away of malady that comes from the gods? You should now be indulgent toward me, o bull.
8. To the red-brown, bright-faced bull, I rouse forth greatly a great good praise hymn.
   I shall do reverence to the sparkling one with acts of reverence. We sing the turbulent name of Rudra.
9. With sturdy limbs, the mighty red-brown one of many forms has adorned himself with gleaming golden (ornaments).
   From Rudra, who is master over the abundant living world, lordly power will surely not be distant.
10. Worthily you bear the arrows and the bow and worthily the sacrificial neck ornament of all forms.
    Worthily you parcel out the whole formless void. Surely there exists nothing more powerful than you, Rudra.
11. Praise the famed youth, sitting upon the high seat, the mighty one, pouncing like a terrifying wild beast.
    Being praised, have mercy on the singer, Rudra. Let your weapons cast down another than us.
12. Even a little boy bows in response to his approving father as he approaches, o Rudra.
    I will hymn the giver of much, the master of settlements. Praised, bestow on us your remedies.
13. Your gleaming remedies, o bullish Maruts, which bring best luck, which are joy itself,
    which our father Manu chose—those of Rudra's do I want as luck and lifetime.
14. Might Rudra's lance avoid us. The hostile thought of the turbulent one, though great, shall go around us.
    Slacken the taut (bows) for our bounteous (patrons). Be merciful to our progeny and posterity, o munificent one.
15. You red-brown bull, constantly visible—(let it be) so, that you do not become angry, o god, and you do not smite.
    Hearing our calls, be aware of us here, Rudra. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.34 (225) Maruts

Gr̥tsamada
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

Following immediately on a hymn dedicated to the Maruts' father Rudra, this hymn describes the Maruts, with the extravagant and imaginative phraseology typically used of them, as the thunderstorm, while urging them to come to the singer's sacrifice. About midway through the hymn (starting in vss. 6–7), the focus shifts to the benefits the Maruts can provide the singer, in inspiring his hymn, protecting him against enemies, and offering gifts. The naturalistic description remains, however; note, for example, the sequential imagery in verse 13, which proceeds from thunder, through lightning and rain, to the post-storm clearing and rainbow.

The hymn also contains a reference (vs. 2) to the enigmatic and sometimes paradoxical parentage and birth of the Maruts from Pr̥śni and Rudra. The motif of the cow, especially the milk-cow with her swollen udder, runs through the hymn (e.g., vss. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12), with reference sequentially or simultaneously to dawns, clouds, the sacrificer's soma-pressings, and the Maruts' gift to him. This multivalent image helps to unify the hymn as it moves from naturalistic description to ritual entreaty.

1. Wooers of the gushing streams, the Maruts of audacious power, like wild beasts fearsome through their forces, provided with chant,
   blazing like fires, possessing the silvery drink, blowing a whirlwind—they unclosed the cows.
2. Like the heavens with their stars they appeared with their spangles. They flashed forth like the rains from the storm clouds,
   when Rudra was begotten for you as the blazing bullish (semen [=rain?]) in the udder of Pr̥śni, o you Maruts with brilliants on your breasts.
3. They sprinkle their horses, like steeds at contests. With [=at the impetus of] the "ears" of the reed(-whip) they speed with the swift ones.
   You of the golden lips, Maruts, constantly setting (them [=lips]) aquiver—you drive to fortifying nourishment with your dappled mares, o you of equal spirit.
4. The ones with lively drops have waxed strong, to fortify all the creatures or for alliance (with them) always.
   With their dappled horses, with their unreceding generosity, they sit at the chariot-pole like the straight-flying (birds) on the traceries (of the branches?).
5. (Come here) with your enflaming [?] milk-cows with teeming udders [=clouds?], along unbesmirched paths, o you with glinting spears—
   like geese to good pastures come here for the exhilaration of the honey, you Maruts of equal spirit.
6. (Come) here to our sacred formulations, you Maruts of equal spirit;
   like Narāśaṃsa [/him who receives men's praise = Agni?] come to our pressings.

Make (them) swell like a mare, a milk-cow in her udder. Make for the singer a visionary thought that has prizes as its ornament.

7. Give us, o Maruts, a prizewinner (attached) to a chariot, a sacred formulation that attains its object, conspicuous day after day.
(Give) refreshment to the praisers; to the bard in the (ritual) enclosures (give) as his gain wisdom and invulnerable might difficult to surpass.

8. When the Maruts with brilliants on their breasts yoke their own horses to the chariots for good fortune—they of good drops [/gifts]—
as a milk-cow in good pastures swells for her young, they (swell) great refreshment for the person who has bestowed oblations.

9. The cheating mortal who set us among wolves— o Maruts, good ones, protect (us) from his harm;
roll over him with your searing wheel. O Rudras, strike down the murderous weapon of the one who lacks proper pronouncements.

10. This bright course of yours, Maruts, appears ever more brightly, when the close friends have milked the udder of Pr̥śni,
or when (they have set) Trita [/the third (heaven)] to scorning (as does) a roarer [=thunder], (set him) to aging (as do) those who age, you undeceivable sons of Rudra.

11. Those great Maruts, travelling their ways, do we invoke for you at your ritual offering for quick Viṣṇu.
With offering spoons extended, creating sacred formulations, we implore the prominent ones of golden hue for generosity worthy to be proclaimed.

12. The Daśagvas were the first to conduct the sacrifice. Let them rouse us at the brightenings of dawn.
As Dawn with her ruddy (beams) uncloses the nights, (so did they unclose the cows) with the greatly blazing light flooding with cows.

13. With their cries [=thunder], with their ornaments like (Dawn's) ruddy (beams), the Rudras have grown strong in the seats of truth.
Pissing downward in a steed's shape, they have assumed their much gleaming, well-bedizened hue.

14. While one [=poet?] is imploring them for a great defense, for help, we hymn them with this reverence right here—
they whom he [=poet?] will cause to roll down here with their wheel for aid, as Trita [/the third one] (brought here) five Hotars for dominance.

15. That with which you carry the feeble one across difficult straits, with which you free your celebrant from scorn,
that is nearby—that help of yours, o Maruts. May your benevolence come here like a bellowing (cow).

II.35 (226) Apām Napāt (Child of the Waters)

Gr̥tsamada
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This is the only R̥gvedic hymn devoted to the divinity Apām Napāt "Child of the Waters," though he is mentioned on a number of occasions elsewhere in the text. This divine name is also found identically in Avestan, but in the R̥gveda it is in the course of becoming an epithet of Agni. In this hymn we see aspects both of the identification with and assimilation to Agni and of the original independent divinity.

After an opening (vss. 1–2) in which the poet in the 1st person offers his praise to the divinity, the heart of the hymn (3–11) describes his birth, care, and feeding by women, who at least in the early verses are the Waters, in sometimes enigmatic phrasing.

The fiery aspect of Apām Napāt is introduced gradually in the hymn, first by the use of vocabulary regularly but not exclusively used elsewhere of Agni, for example the "shining" words (vss. 3–4); as the hymn continues, vocabulary and imagery point more and more strongly to fire, for example the twigs and plants in verse 8, the emphasis on golden color in verses 9–10. But it is not until the second half of verse 11 that unambiguous reference to physical fire is found (the verb "kindle" as well as the identification of ghee as his food—though ghee first made its appearance in verse 4). It is doubtless no accident that the first half of verse 11 announces Apām Napāt as his "secret name": this explicit reference confirms that the poem heretofore has been framed as a riddle or enigma, for which "Apām Napāt" is the solution. (Verse 13 also codes the same distinction between the originally separate identities of Apām Napāt and Agni, by connecting the name Apām Napāt with "the body of another," namely Agni.)

After the climactic verse 11, the hymn then takes a more ritual turn, and the 1st-person ritualist of verse 1 returns in verse 12. In this ritualistic section, the paradox of Apām Napāt being nurtured by the waters and his double, Agni, being nurtured by the fire-tenders is resolved (or the images are superimposed) by having the waters bring ghee to him.

1. I, seeking prizes, have set loose my eloquence. The offspring of the rivers should take delight in my hymns.
   The Child of the Waters who impels swift (horses)—surely he will make them well-ornamented? For he will savor (them).
2. This well-crafted spell we would speak to him from our heart. Surely he will take cognizance of it?
   The Child of the Waters, our compatriot, with the greatness of his lordly power begat all beings.
3. Some come together; others go directly (to the sea): (but) it is the same vessel that the rivers fill.

The gleaming, shining Child of the Waters do the gleaming waters surround.

4. The youth do the youthful waters, (though) unsmiling, circle around while they groom him.
   With his gleaming, dexterous (flames) he shines richly for us, (though) without fuel, with his garment of ghee, in the waters.
5. To him, the unfaltering god, do the three women goddesses desire to provide food.
   For he keeps stretching himself out in the waters as if toward (just) "made" [=deflowered] women. He sucks the beestings of those who give birth for the first time.
6. Here is the birth of the horse and of this sun [=Agni?]. From deceit, from harm—from the infusion (of them)—protect the patrons.
   Neither hostilities nor untruths shall reach him in the "raw" fortifications, him who is not to be forgotten (though) far away.
7. Whoever has a good-milking cow in his own house, he swells his own power; he eats food of good essence.
   The Child of the Waters, being nourished within the waters, radiates widely to give goods to the one who honors him.
8. He who in the waters, truthful and inexhaustible, radiates far and wide with his heavenly gleaming—
   the other entities are propagated just as twigs of him, and the plants propagate themselves through their progeny.
9. Because the Child of the Waters has mounted the lap of those who are sloping, (himself) erect, clothing himself in the lightning flash,
   as they carry his preeminent greatness, the golden-hued exuberant maidens circle around him.
10. Golden-formed, he has a golden appearance—the Child of the Waters—and he is also golden-hued,
    (coming) out of a golden womb when he sits down (on the ritual ground). The givers of gold give food to him.
11. This his face and his dear secret name grow strong—(the name) of the Child of the Waters—
    whom the youthful women together kindle just so: golden-hued ghee is food for him.
12. To him, the closest comrade of many, we would do honor with sacrifices, with reverence, with oblations.
    I groom his back; I seek to provide (him) with wood-shavings. I provide (him) with food; I extol (him) with verses.
13. As bull he begat the embryo in these (waters). As infant he sucks them; they lick him.
    The Child of the Waters, whose color never fades, has toiled here as if with the body of another.

14. Him standing in this highest footprint here, shining always along unbesmirched (paths)—
    the waters bringing ghee as food to the Child (of the Waters), the exuberant maidens fly encircling (him) with themselves as his cloaks.
15. I have proffered a good dwelling-place to the people, o Agni, and I have proffered a well-twisted (hymn) to the bounteous ones.
    All that is fortunate which the gods aid. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.36 (227) Sequential Deities (for the R̥tugrahas)

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: jagatī

This hymn concerns a particular set of ritual offerings (R̥tugrahas "sequential cups") made to a prescribed set of gods in a fixed order, and, with the following hymn, II.37, provides the complete set, which is also found in the single hymn I.15. As was clearly seen already by Oldenberg (1888: 193), II.36–37 in fact themselves form a single hymn, not only because of their shared ritual content but also because at six verses apiece, they violate the rule of maṇḍala organization, whereby hymns within a single group contain descending number of verses. II.36–37 fall between a hymn of fifteen verses and one of eleven; when combined, their twelve verses fit perfectly in the sequence.

Each verse identifies a different god (or groups of gods) and the priest whose duty it is to make the offering. Several of the verses are structured as riddles, with the name of the god either suppressed or postponed until near the end; the audience would have had no trouble solving these riddles, since the vocabulary and the actions are stereotyped for each god. (Our solutions to such riddles are given at the end of the verses in question.) Nonetheless, II.36–37 show rhetorical ambitions almost entirely absent from the bare-bones and poetically inert I.15.

In this hymn Indra is honored twice (vss. 1 and 5) but by two different priests, and in the second instance it is probably Indra in the guise of Br̥haspati. In both these verses the exhilarating drink soma, Indra's special potion, is also referred to in a riddling fashion. For further discussion of the ritual and its litany, see I.15.

1. Being impelled for you, it has clothed itself in cows, in waters; the men have milked it with the stones through the sheep('s wool).
   At "Hail!," o Indra, drink from the Hotar's cup the soma poured out when the *vaṣaṭ*-cry is made—you who first have dominion over it.
2. Commingling with sacrifices, with your dappled (mares), with your spears, resplendent on your journey and in your ornaments, and dear,

having sat on the ritual grass, you sons of Bharata, drink soma from the Potar's cup, you men of heaven [=Maruts].

3. As if to home, come to us here, all you of easy call; then sit on the ritual grass and take pleasure.
   Then, o Tvaṣṭar, become exhilarated on the stalk, having delighted in the call, flocking with the divine ones, (namely) the Wives (of the Gods).
4. Convey the gods hither, you inspired poet, and perform sacrifice. Willingly, o Hotar, sit down in your three wombs.
   Receive the somian honey that has been set forth. Drink from the Agnīdh's cup. Reach satiety from your portion. [=Agni]
5. This one here strengthens the manly powers of your body; as might, as strength it was laid in your arms (already) on a distant day.
   For you it is pressed, bounteous one, for you it is borne here—you, drink it to satiety from the Brahman's cup. [=Indra/Bṛhaspati]
6. You two, enjoy the sacrifice; take heed of my call. The Hotar is seated, following the ancient invitations [/nivids].
   Homage goes to you two kings to turn (you) hither. From the Praśāstar's cup drink the somian honey. [=Mitra and Varuṇa]

II.37 (228) Sequential Deities (for the Ṛtugrahas)

Gṛtsamada
6 verses: jagatī

See the remarks on the previous hymn, as well as I.15.7–10. In that latter hymn, as in this one, four verses are devoted to the offerings to the shadowy figure of the Wealth-Giver (Draviṇodā); these verses may be there merely to bring the number of offerings to twelve, to correspond with the secondary interpretation of *ṛtú* as season, and hence to match the number of offerings to the months of the year, as discussed in the introduction to I.15.

1. Become exhilarated on the stalk, from the Hotar's cup at your pleasure. O Adhvaryu, he desires a full outpouring.
   Bring this to him. Such is the desire of the giver. The soma from the Hotar's cup, o Wealth-Giver—drink it at your turns.
2. The one I invoked previously, him I invoke right now. Just he is to be invoked, who owns the name "Giver."
   The somian honey has been set forth by the Adhvaryus. The soma from the Potar's cup, o Wealth-Giver—drink it at your turns.
3. Let your draft-animals become fat, with which you go speeding. Allowing no harm to befall, make yourself firm, o lord of the forest [=chariot].

Having drawn it to you, bold one, having greeted it: the soma from the Neṣṭar's cup, o Wealth-Giver—drink it at your turns.

4. He has drunk from the Hotar's cup, and from the Potar's he has become exhilarated, and from the Neṣṭar's he has enjoyed the pleasurable offering set out.
   The fourth cup, indestructible and immortal, let the Wealth-Giver, descendant of the Wealth-Giver, drink.
5. You two, today yoke your coursing, man-conveying chariot in our direction: here is your unhitching.
   Mix the oblations with honey. Come hither! Then drink the soma, you who possess prizewinning mares. [=Aśvins]
6. Enjoy the kindling, Agni; enjoy the oblation; enjoy the sacred formulation stemming from your people; enjoy the lovely praise.
   With all (the gods?), good one, eagerly make all the great gods eagerly drink the oblation in their turn.

II.38 (229) Savitar

Gr̥tsamada
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is typically, and in our view rightly, identified as an evening hymn, in which Savitar quiets the world for the night. The hymn is closely analyzed by Falk (1988), who argues that the occasion of the hymn is the evening of the summer solstice, which marked the beginning of the rainy season. According to Falk, in the second millennium BCE on this night the Milky Way rose from the horizon at dusk. The arc of the Milky Way, he says, was pictured as the outstretched arms of Savitar. Be that as it may, most of the images in the hymn are applicable to evening in general.

The first six verses present a lovely series of images of the quiet and rest that evening brings to the natural and the human world—almost ironically because the daily round of busy movement ceases at the "impulsion" of the "Impeller" (the literal meaning of Savitar). In the following two verses (7–8), Savitar's ability to bring each creature to its home place at night is extended: he also has assigned to all categories of creatures their proper position in the natural world. The remainder of the hymn celebrates the power of Savitar even over the gods (vs. 9) and asks for his gifts (10–11). The latter verse makes reference to Savitar's distribution of beings to their separate realms by asking for gifts from heaven, the waters, and the earth. Savitar's apportioning of benefits in these last verses return us to the theme of the first verse (1cd), which announced his gifts to gods and to the mortal sacrificer.

1. God Savitar has stood up to impel again as always—the draft-horse whose work this is—

for now he distributes treasure to the gods, and he has also given a share in well-being to him whose oblations are worth pursuing.

2. Because the god, erect and with broad hands, extends his arms for all to obey,
   even the waters are submissive to his commandment and even this wind here rests in its circling.
3. Even the one who drives with swift (horses) will now unhitch. He has brought to rest even the wanderer from his travelling.
   He has held in check the greed even of the snake-stickers [?]. Following the commandment of Savitar, "Release" [=Evening] has come.
4. Once again the weaver has wrapped up what was stretched out; in the middle of his work the mindful (worker) has set down his craft.
   Having pulled himself together, he [=Savitar] has stood up. He has always kept the seasons separate. As Proper Thinking, god Savitar has come.
5. The domestic blaze of fire is dispersed prominently throughout the houses, one for each, for (each one's) whole lifetime.
   The mother has set out the best portion for her son, according to his intention, which has been aroused by Savitar.
6. (Whatever) was dispersed seeking gain has been gathered together. Desire for home has arisen in all who roam.
   Each and every one has come, abandoning unfinished work, following the commandment of the divine Savitar.
7. The watery (race) has been placed by you among the waters; the wild beasts have been dispersed throughout the wastelands, as their share;
   the forests are for birds. No one violates these commandments of god Savitar.
8. As far as (Savitar's) benefit extends, Varuṇa (has come) to his watery womb, restlessly darting about at (every) blink (of the eye).
   Every mortal creature, (every) domestic beast has come to its pen. Savitar has distributed the races according to their stations.
9. Whose commandment neither Indra nor Varuṇa, neither Mitra nor Aryaman, nor Rudra violates,
   nor do hostile powers—for well-being I call him here with homage: god Savitar.
10. As (we) arouse Fortune, Insight, and Plenitude—Praise of Men, the husband of the Wives, should help us—
    might we be dear to god Savitar at the approach of a desirable thing and at the gathering of riches.
11. That desirable benefit given by you has come to us from heaven, from the waters, from earth,
    (a benefit) that will become weal for your praisers and your friend, the singer whose recitations extend widely, o Savitar.

II.39 (230) Aśvins

Gr̥tsamada
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn takes quite an original approach in matching every description of the Aśvins with a simile. He avoids the monotony that might otherwise result both by the cleverness of his similes and by the occasional pun, in which a descriptive word fits the object in the simile in one meaning but the target, the Aśvins, in another. In verse 2, for example, *jáneṣu* "in the presence of the people" or "peoples" refers to witnesses at a wedding in the simile, but in the target phrase they are the tribes who perceive the united resolve of the Aśvins. Or again, in verse 7a, within the simile the word *śaktí* probably refers to a "spear," but in the target it is the "power" of the Aśvins. In 7b, the *rájāṃsi* are all the spaces gathered between heaven and earth in the simile, but regions given by the Aśvins, through which the poet and his people can wander, in the target phrase. In verse 1, *jarethe*, here translated "you awaken," could equally well mean "you sing," especially since the pressing stones elsewhere are said to "sing."

Another feature of the hymn is that the poet often describes the Aśvins as variously beneficial for one's *tanū́*, one's "body" or simply "oneself." Normally we might take the word as a reflexive, but the poet compares the Aśvins to various limbs and makes direct reference to bodies, so we have kept the stronger reference to the body in the translation.

In verse 7—the last verse of the poem proper since verse 8 is a signature verse standing outside it—there is a final simile. This is the only one in which the object is not in the dual and not compared to the Aśvins. Rather the object, an axe, is in the singular and compared to "these songs" chanted for the Aśvins. This twist at the end thus breaks the pattern of the hymn and marks its conclusion.

1. Like pressing stones, you two awaken to just this purpose: like vultures toward a tree, (you awaken to go) toward what provides hidden treasures (of honey);
   like formulators, you recite hymns at the ritual distribution; like messengers, you, serving your people, are to be called upon in many places.
2. Journeying early in the morning like heroes in chariots, like twin goats you follow what you choose;
   (Beautifying your bodies) like exchange-wives beautifying their bodies, like a married couple (in the presence of the people) you find (a common) resolve in the presence of the peoples.
3. Like the horns (of a butting animal), come in front toward us, darting like hooves endowed with staying power.
   Like *cakravāka*-geese (reuniting) at every dawn, o you ruddy ones, journey this way like chariot-drivers, o able ones.

4. Like boats, take us across—like yokes, like wheel naves, like a wheel's cross-pieces, like its outer-pieces, (take) us (across).
   Allowing no injury to our bodies like dogs, like amulets [?] protect us from collapse.
5. Never growing old like winds, (forming a single) current like rivers, (endowed) with sight like eyes, journey here this way.
   Becoming the best blessing for the body like hands, like feet, lead us toward the better thing.
6. Speaking honey for the mouth like lips, swell like breasts in order that we live.
   Guardians of our body like noses, like ears be good hearers for us.
7. Like hands (clasping a spear), clasping power for us, herd together spaces for us as heaven and earth (herd together the airy spaces).
   Sharpen these songs that are seeking you, Aśvins, like an axe with a whetstone.
8. The Gr̥tsamadas have made these that strengthen you, Aśvins—the holy formulations and the praise song.
   Having delighted in them, drive nearby, you two superior men. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.40 (231) Soma and Pūṣan

Gr̥tsamada
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Soma and Pūṣan are addressed jointly in just this one hymn, and it is difficult to see what brings them together here. The last three verses of this six-verse hymn contrast their functions; in the first three they act jointly, but these actions are not particularly characteristic of either of the two.

1. O Soma and Pūṣan, you, the two begetters of riches, begetters of heaven, begetters of earth,
   born as the herdsmen of every living thing, did the gods make as the navel of the immortal.
2. These two gods here, as they were being born, did (the gods) enjoy. These two hid the unenjoyable shades of darkness.
   For these two, for Soma and Pūṣan, Indra begot the cooked [=milk] within the raw, within the ruddy ones [=cows].
3. O Soma and Pūṣan, the chariot [=sacrifice?] with seven wheels and five reins that measures out the airy realm but does not speed everyone,
   rolling in various directions, being yoked with mind, that do you quicken, you bulls.

4. The one made his seat in heaven high above; the other on earth and in the midspace.
   Let those two unleash for us thriving of wealth that brings many rewards and many cattle; let them unloose the navel for us.
5. The one begat all living things; the other goes along watching over everything.
   Soma and Pūṣan, give help to my insight. With you two would we win all battles.
6. Let Pūṣan quicken insight, he who speeds everyone. Let Soma, the master of wealth, establish wealth.
   Let the goddess Aditi, who is without assault, help us. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.41 (232) Various Gods

Gr̥tsamada
21 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 16–17, and br̥hatī 18, arranged in tr̥cas

This is a composite hymn: its composite nature is clear from its position in the maṇḍala, for with twenty-one verses it is far longer than the preceding hymn, which contains six. The hymn has been assembled from the three-verse units known as tr̥cas. It is also of mixed meter, though gāyatrī prevails for most of the hymn (vss. 1–15 and 19–21).

Nonetheless, with the exception of the final three verses (19–21), the hymn forms a *ritual* unity, treating in order the gods addressed in a structured recitation forming part of the Morning Pressing, which is found also in later Vedic śrauta ritual, known as the Praügaśastra. Other instantiations of this recitation in the R̥gveda are found in I.2–3 (see remarks there) and I.23. The order of divinities is Vāyu (1–2), Indra-Vāyu (3), Mitra-Varuṇa (4–6), Aśvins (7–9), Indra (10–12), the All Gods (13–15), Sarasvatī (16–18). The last three verses (19–21) are, according to Oldenberg (1888: 197 and n. 4), an independent tr̥ca, relating to the carts holding the oblation (havirdhāna carts), that was mistakenly incorporated into the hymn. Even if this last tr̥ca was a late addition, it is worth noting that the first and last verses of the hymn end with the word *sómapītaye* "for soma-drinking," forming at least a nominal ring.

1. O Vāyu, the chariots in thousands that are yours—with them come here,
   you with your teams, for soma-drinking.
2. You with your teams, Vāyu, come here. This clear (soma) has been held out to you.
   You are wont to come to the house of the presser.
3. Of the clear (soma) today and of the one mixed with milk, with its teams, o Indra and Vāyu—
   drive here and drink it, men!

4. Here is the soma pressed for you, o Mitra and Varuṇa, who are strong through truth.
Heed just *my* call here.
5. The two kings without deceit—in the highest, steadfast seat
with its thousand pillars they sit.
6. These two sovereign kings, whose potion is ghee, Ādityas, the lords of the drop,
accompany him who does not go astray.

7. Nāsatyas, Aśvins, drive (your circuit) bringing cows, bringing horses,
your circuit protective of men, o Rudras,
8. So that no distant mortal nor one close by will dare against (you), you of bullish goods—
(and no) defaming cheat.
9. Aśvins, convey to us here wealth of tawny aspect
that finds a wide realm, o holy ones.

10. Indra, certainly, will drive away great fear as it looms,
for he is steadfast, boundless.
11. And if Indra will have mercy on us, no evil will reach us from behind.
There will be good for us in front.
12. Indra will make (us) without fear from all the regions round about.
He is the one who conquers rivals—the boundless one.

13. All you gods, come here; hear this call of mine.
Sit down here on this ritual grass.
14. The sharp and the honeyed invigorating (soma) are here for you among the Śunahotras.
Drink this desirable (drink).
15. Having Indra as chief, the Maruts as troop, and the gifts of Pūṣan, o gods,
all of you, hear my call.

16. O best mother, best river, best goddess, Sarasvatī—
we are like ones unlauded: make a laud for us, mother.
17. In you, the goddess, are all lifetimes fixed, o Sarasvatī.
Become exhilarated among the Śunahotras. Allot offspring to us, goddess.
18. Enjoy these sacred formulations here, o Sarasvatī rich in prize-winning mares,
the thoughts dear to the gods that the Gr̥tsamadas pour for you, truthful one.

19. Let the two advance who are beneficial to the sacrifice. Just you two we choose here
and Agni, the conveyor of the oblation.

20. Let Heaven and Earth today hold fast this effective, heaven-touching sacrifice of ours among the gods.
21. Let the gods, deserving the sacrifice, sit in the lap of you two who are without deceit,
    here today for the soma-drinking.

II.42 (233) Omen-Bird

Gr̥tsamada
3 verses: triṣṭubh

The last two brief hymns in Maṇḍala II have a popular character and call on the "omen bird" (*śakúni* / *śakúnti*) to produce only auspicious cries. The second of the two (II.43) playfully compares the bird to various priests in the ritual and is thus reminiscent of the famous "Frog Hymn" (VII.103), which identifies the behavior of frogs in the monsoon with that of priests.

1. Ever screeching, announcing its kind [=species], it directs its speech like an oarsman his boat.
   And if you will be of good omen, bird, let no evil eye at all find you.
2. Let not the falcon tear you up, nor the eagle. Let not a hero with arrows, an archer find you.
   Ever screeching in the direction of the fathers, you of good omen, speaking auspiciously, speak here.
3. Screech down to the right of the houses, as one of good omen, speaking auspiciously, o bird.
   Let not a thief gain mastery of us, nor an utterer of evil. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

II.43 (234) Omen-Bird

Gr̥tsamada
3 verses: jagatī 1, 3, atiśakvarī or aṣṭi 2

See the remarks on II.42.

1. Turning toward the right the bards sing welcome—the birds speaking at their proper season, the birds of omen.
   It speaks both speeches like a sāman-singer: it regulates both gāyatrī and triṣṭubh meters.

2. Like the Udgātar, o omen-bird, you sing the sāman. Like the Son of the Sacred Formulation, you recite at the pressings.
   Like a bullish prize-winner [=stallion] when he has approached (mares) with young, speak auspiciously to us in every way, omen-bird—
   speak pleasantly to us in all ways, omen-bird.
3. When you are speaking, omen-bird, speak auspiciously; when you are sitting silently, take note of our good thought.
   When, as you fly up, you speak like a lute… – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

III

Maṇḍala III

With a few exceptions, the hymns of Maṇḍala III belong to Viśvāmitra Gāthina and other members of his family. Of the sixty-two hymns in the maṇḍala, the Anukramaṇī states that Viśvāmitra himself composed all or parts of forty-six, along with two others that might be his or that might belong to another poet (III.31, 38). The Anukramaṇī attributes four hymns in the Agni series (III.19–22) to Viśvāmitra's father, Gāthin Kauśika, and one Indra hymn (III.31) either to Viśvāmitra or to his grandfather, Kuśika Aiṣīrathi. Vaiśvāmitras, Viśvāmitra's sons or descendants, are also represented in the maṇḍala: Kata (III.17–18), R̥ṣabha (III.13–14), and possibly Prajāpati (III.38, 54–56), as is one grandson, Utkīla Kātya (III.15–16), the son of Kata Vaiśvāmitra. Outside of III, a few verses (IX.67.13–15; X.137.5) and one jointly composed hymn (X.167) are also attributed to Viśvāmitra. Likewise, other Vaiśvāmitras appear among the composers of hymns in IX and X: Madhuchandas (IX.1), Reṇu (IX.70, X.89), Aṣṭaka (X.104), and Pūraṇa (X.160). Among the remaining poets of III mentioned by the Anukramaṇī are Devaśravas Bhārata and Devavāta Bhārata, who, it says, together composed the Agni hymn, III.23. The Anukramaṇī's attribution may be drawn from the hymn itself, which mentions the two. However, the Bhārata king Sudās was the patron of Viśvāmitra, and the inclusion of a hymn ostensibly by two Bhāratas may reflect the close connection between the clans of the poet and the king.

The Viśvāmitra collection is dominated by hymns to Agni (1–29) and to Indra (30–53). It concludes with four hymns to the All Gods (54–57) and single hymns to the Aśvins (58), Mitra (59), the R̥bhus (60), and Dawn (61). The hymn to Mitra is the only hymn dedicated solely to this god in the R̥gveda and perhaps shows a special affinity between Mitra and his partial namesake, Viśvāmitra. The last hymn (62) is a collection of tr̥cas to six different deities or pairs of deities, including some not otherwise represented in the maṇḍala. The hymn would not be especially noteworthy, except that verse 10, dedicated to Savitar, is the Gāyatrī mantra, the best-known verse in the R̥gveda.

Within the Agni series is a hymn (III.8) to the sacrificial post or posts, to which sacrificial animals would have been tied. Also in this series is a hymn (III.12) to the dual divinities, Indra and Agni. They are brought together here because Agni, representing the sacrifice, and Indra, representing the warriors, jointly lead the

clans' victorious march across the rivers. Another unusual Agni hymn is III.26, which follows the process of kindling the sacrificial fire and anticipates the later *Āgnimāruta* śastra. In the Indra series, a historically and literarily significant hymn is III.33, which addresses the Rivers, Viśvāmitra himself, and Indra, and which the Anukramaṇī attributes to the Rivers and Viśvāmitra. The reason for the Anukramaṇī's attribution is that this hymn is a dialogue between Viśvāmitra and the Vipāś and Śutudrī Rivers. The poet approaches the Rivers and asks them to stop in order to allow the Bhāratas to cross. These two rivers are the modern Beas and Sutlej, which are part of the Indus river complex, and crossing these rivers may mark a raid, seasonal migration, or resettlement from the west toward the east. In III.33, which likely marks a later period in the Bhāratas' migration, they are in the area of the Sarasvatī, Dṛṣadvatī, and Āpayā rivers, and although the identification of these rivers is controversial, they probably place the Bhāratas in Kurukṣetra, east of the Vipāś and Śutudrī. Also in the Indra series is a cosmogonic hymn, III.38, which describes the origin of the material of creation and the division of that material into names and forms. Like the even more famous X.129, the hymn compares the creativity that founded the world to the creativity of the poet. The last hymn of the Indra series and a supplement to it is III.53, which is a praise of Viśvāmitra and his family and of King Sudās and the Bhāratas, whom they serve.

One of the distinctive characteristics of this maṇḍala is that its poets mark seven of its Agni hymns (1, 5, 6, 7, 15, 22, and 23) and twelve of its Indra hymns (30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 43, 48, 49, and 50) with a final verse that identifies the hymn as a Vaiśvāmitra creation. Other poetic families also have such signature verses, but the Viśvāmitras have one for their Agni hymns and a different one for the Indra hymns.

III.1 (235) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
23 verses: triṣṭubh

In our interpretation, Agni opens the hymn with a declaration that the priests have kindled him to carry the oblations. The poet and the priests then confirm that they have indeed laid the fire to begin the rite. Implied in the first two verses is thus the birth of the sacrificial fire, and the birth of Agni then becomes the central theme of the hymn. The first part of the hymn (vss. 3–14) reflects not only on the birth of the ritual fire, but also on Agni's ultimate birth from the waters. Indeed, throughout much of the first half of the hymn, the verses can be taken as describing either the birth of the ritual fire or the ultimate birth of Agni or both. The poem thus merges Agni's original or ultimate birth among the waters and his birth here in the sacrifice to the accompaniment of the priestly recitations. This poetic strategy complicates the translation and interpretation of the hymn. For example, verse 4 refers to the "seven young women," who are also the mares who tend to Agni (4cd) and who

reappear again in verses 6 and 9. In verse 4 these seven women are likely the rivers, as Geldner rightly notes, but in verse 6 they are identified, unexpectedly, as the voices of the seven priests of the soma rite. Retrospectively, therefore, we can view these women as both the rivers and the voices. Similarly in verse 11 the "kindred sisters" might be the rivers, or they might again be the voices of the priests.

The identity of Agni's father also complicates the story of Agni's birth. In verse 10 Agni gives rise to Agni, and therefore Agni is also his own father. But then who is the father in verse 9? Geldner and Renou think that his father there is Heaven, Heaven's udder the raincloud, and therefore the fire here is lightning. More likely, however, the reference is to the ritual fire. If so, then the father in verse 9 might be the priest churning the fire, the udder his voice, and the udder's "spurts and streams" the words of the priest. Or, again in light of verse 10, the father might be Agni, who nurtures himself through the "spurts and streams" of his spreading flames. Or, just as in the case of the "seven young women," the poet may intend several of these possibilities.

As Geldner notes, from verse 15 the poet more unambiguously addresses the ritual fire, though he does return to the theme of Agni's births in verse 20. This time, though, the reference may be not only to the ultimate origins of Agni but also and primarily to the ritual fires of long ago and the ritual fire of the present.

1. [Agni:] "You have made me your draft-horse, who am mighty from soma—(saying,) 'Convey (the oblations), o Agni'—in order (for me) to offer the sacrifice at the ritual distribution."
   [The poet:] "As you shine toward the gods—I harness the stone and I labor, o Agni—take delight in your own body."
2. [The priests:] "We have made the sacrifice turned to the east (in order to begin). Let our song become strong." (So saying) they befriend Agni with kindling wood and with reverence.
   From heaven they [=the gods?] have directed the ritual distributions of the sages. They have sought the way for (Agni), even for the clever and mighty one.
3. The wise (Agni) of refined skill created joy for himself—he who through his birth is the close kin of heaven and of earth.
   The gods found the lovely one within the waters; (they found) Agni in the work of the sisters [=rivers or fingers of the priests].
4. The seven young women strengthened him of good fortune, who is white as he comes to birth, red in his greatness.
   (Those) mares came to him (newly born) as to a new-born colt. The gods marveled at Agni at his birth.
5. Stretching through the airy realm with his blazing limbs, purifying his resolve through the sage poets as his purifying filters,
   clothing himself all around in flame, and being the life of the waters, he measures out his splendors, lofty and never wanting.

6. He wandered toward them, who neither speak falsely nor can be deceived, who are the young women of heaven, neither clothing themselves nor naked.
   Here the young women of long ago, who came from the same womb, conceived their single embryo—they, the seven voices.
7. Strewn about and pressing together are his (flames) of all colors in the womb of ghee and in the stream of the honeyed (soma juices).
   Here have the swelling cows [=milk offerings] taken their stand. The two mothers of wondrous (Agni) [=the two fire churning sticks?] are the two great ones, the two united.
8. Being carried (as an embryo), o son of strength, you have flashed out, assuming your wondrous forms that blaze and rage.
   Streams of honey and ghee drip where the bull has grown strong through our poetic craft.
9. At his birth, he found the udder even of his father. He let loose its streams and spurts in every direction.
   Him who moves in hiding from his kind companions [=the priests]—(though) he was not hidden from the young women of heaven—
10. (Him) who was the embryo of his father and begetter did he himself carry. Alone, he suckled upon the many swelling females.
    (Protect) his two kindred cowives for the blazing bull, protect the pair [=the fire-churning sticks?] belonging to the sons of Manu for him.
11. The great one has grown strong in the broad and unrestricted (place). The waters (go) to Agni, for glory gets the girls.
    In the womb of truth lay the lord of the house, Agni, within the work of the kindred sisters.
12. Like a burden-bearing foal [?], at the meeting place of the great (waters?), the one desirable for a son to see and foaming with radiance,
    the begetter who gave birth to the ruddy (cows of dawn), the embryo of the waters, and the best of men is the young Agni.
13. The (fire-churning) Wood—she who brings good fortune—has given birth to the lovely embryo of the waters and of the plants, to him of various colors.
    Since they have united in their thinking, even the gods befriend the most admired and powerful one as soon as he is born.
14. Like blazing flashes of lightning, lofty radiant beams accompany Agni, foaming with radiance,
    as they yield as their milk the immortal (Agni), grown strong within his own seat as if in hiding, within the unbounded container.
15. I call upon you, sacrificing with my offerings, and I call upon your companionship and your favor with desire.
    With the gods, give help in full measure to the singer, and guard us with your faces that belong to the house.

16. As your dependents, o well-guiding Agni, receiving all riches
and thrusting ourselves forward with a fame that comes with good seed, we would prevail over the godless battle-mongers.
17. Here have you come to be the beacon of the gods, o Agni, delighting and knowing all poetic crafts.
As the lord of the household, you allowed mortals to settle down, and as a charioteer bringing success, you journey following the gods.
18. The immortal king has taken his seat in the house of mortals, bringing success to the ritual distributions.
His face covered in ghee, he flashed out widely—Agni knowing all poetic crafts.
19. Come to us together with your kind companionship, hastening as the great one together with your great help.
Make for us abundant wealth that brings us safely across, and a share for us that brings beautiful speech and glory.
20. These your births of long ago, o Agni, and your present ones I shall proclaim for the ancient one.
Great soma-pressings for the bull have been made here. Jātavedas has been installed in one birth after another.
21. Having been installed in one birth after another, Jātavedas, the inexhaustible, is kindled by the Viśvāmitras.
We would be within the good will of him who is worthy of the sacrifice, even within his favorable benevolence.
22. O you endowed with strength, you of strong resolve, place this sacrifice among the gods for us, giving (it to them).
Hold forth the lofty refreshing drinks for us, o Hotar. O Agni, win great wealth by sacrifice.
23. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.2 (236) Agni Vaiśvānara

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
15 verses: jagatī

The first verse announces the two themes of this hymn: the establishment of the fire in the sacrifice and its connection with the words recited by the priests. The poet begins by announcing that the priests are creating the *dhiṣáṇā*, the "Holy Place" for the fire. The meaning and etymology of *dhiṣáṇā* are not transparent, but it is synchronically associated with the root √*dhā* "place, establish"—allowing the reference to the Holy

Place of fire to be carried through this hymn by the frequent use of derivatives of √*dhā* (vss. 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 15, echoed in vs. 6 when √*dhā* is used not to describe the placement of fire but the establishment of wealth for the sacrificers). The placement of fire is also connected to the words of the priests. The chanters "bring together" Agni as their Hotar (vs. 1); gods originally gave rise to Agni through their "insights" (vs. 3); and Agni flourishes "through our good thoughts" (vs. 12). The close connection between the words of the sacrificial performers and the kindling of fire is reflected in the poet's description of Agni as a *kaví,* a sage poet (vss. 4, 7, 10).

This hymn also explicitly describes or refers to the rites surrounding fire, sometimes connecting them with the character of the god Agni and often his role as Vaiśvānara, the sun. In 4d, for example, the poet puns on *rā́jantam*, which can describe Agni as both "ruling" (as it is translated there) and "shining" with his heavenly flame as fire is kindled. In verse 9 the three kindling sticks may refer to the three fires set to the west, south, and east that surround the sacrificial area, which represents the earth. Thus Agni as the ritual fires around the sacrificial ground is also Agni as the sun, which encircles the earth. And in verse 12, as Geldner rightly remarks, the course of Agni is both the course of the sun and the *paryagnikaraṇa*, the rite of carrying the fire around the sacrificial animal.

At the end of the hymn, having set the fire in place, the poet turns to the Fire to beg for easy travel, for the prizes of victory in the sacrificial contest, and for wealth.

1. We give birth to the Holy Place for Vaiśvānara, who grows strong
 through the truth, like purified ghee for Agni.
 Once again, as an axe brings together a chariot, the chanters (bring
 together) with their insight the Hotar [=Agni], (who was) also (the
 Hotar) of Manu.
2. He made both world-halves shine through his birth. He became the son
 to be invoked by his two parents [=Heaven and Earth?].
 Agni is the conveyor of oblations, unaging and placed for delight,
 difficult to deceive, the guest of the clans, rich in radiance.
3. In accordance with their will and upon the broad foundation of their skill
 and power to surpass, the gods gave birth to Agni through their insights.
 I speak to the great one, shining with his radiance and his light, as one
 who wants to win the prize (speaks) to his steed.
4. Wanting to win it, we choose the desirable, audacious, verse-worthy prize
 of the delighting (Agni),
 the gift of the Bhr̥gus, the fire-priest with a poet's resolve—Agni
 (himself), who rules with his heavenly flame.
5. With twisted ritual grass, the peoples have placed Agni in front, him who
 brings fame as a prize, for the sake of his favor,
 and with offering ladle extended, they (have placed) him, brightly
 shining, belonging to all the gods, the Rudra of the sacrifices, bringing
 success to the offerings of the (ritual) workers.

6. O you of pure flame, because our men with twisted ritual grass in the sacrifices are all around your dwelling, o Hotar,
   they are drawing near, seeking your company, your friendship, o Agni. Establish wealth for them.
7. The great sun filled both world-halves, when the (ritual) workers supported him when he was just born.
   And he, the sage poet, is led around for the rite, like a steed, for the winning of the prize, being placed for delight.
8. Revere him who gives the oblation, who makes the rites good. Befriend the domestic Jātavedas.
   The charioteer of the lofty truth who has no boundary, Agni has become the one placed in front of the gods.
9. The deathless fire-priests purified three kindling sticks for the youthful, earth-encircling Agni.
   While they placed one of these as a benefit for the mortal, two also went up to the wide world (of heaven) kindred (to the earth).
10. The refreshments of the sons of Manu [=the oblations of ghee] have perfected him, the poet of the clans, the clanlord, to be sharp like an axe.
    He journeys to the heights and the depths, being ever active. He supports his embryo among these living beings.
11. Since he understands how, the bull enlivens himself in his shimmering bellies like a loudly roaring lion—
    deathless Vaiśvānara of broad visage, who distributes goods and treasures to the pious man.
12. As of old, Vaiśvānara mounted the vault of the sky, the back of heaven, becoming joyful through our good thoughts.
    As before, producing the winnings for the (human) race, being awake, he goes around the same course.
13. The inspired one, possessing the truth, worthy of the sacrifice, and worthy of hymns, the dwelling in heaven whom Mātariśvan placed here—
    him do we beseech, him whose path is shimmering, whose hair is tawny, beautifully shining Agni, for a newer easy passage.
14. Like the blazing (sun) in its course, the vigorous one of sunlike appearance, the beacon of heaven, standing within the realm of light and awakening at dawn—
    Agni, the unstoppable head of heaven, him do we beseech with our reverence on high as our prizewinner horse.
15. The delighting Hotar, the blazing one free of duplicity, the lord of the household, worthy of hymns and belonging to all lands,
    like the shimmering chariot [=the sun?], lovely to see for his beautiful form, the one placed by Manu, do we ever beseech for wealth.

III.3 (237) Agni Vaiśvānara

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: jagatī

In this hymn the poet stresses the dual role of Agni as fire and sun and therefore as belonging to mortals and to gods. The movement between Agni as the sacrificial fire and as the sun is announced in the first verse: Agni befriends the gods, and he also maintains the integrity of the sacrifice for humans. Because he belongs to both gods and mortals, Agni moves between the two world-halves, the sphere of the gods in heaven and the place of mortals on earth—a theme repeated in verses 2, 4, 6, and 10. Some of the more enigmatic aspects of this hymn may reflect the location of Agni in both heaven and earth and the unity of Agni as sacrificial fire and as the sun. In verse 8 Agni's simultaneous connection to gods and mortals reaches a climax, in which it is not clear which of the two is being talked about. Who or what is being strengthened? Is it the gods, the kin of Manu, the sacrifice, or even Agni himself? In verse 2 Agni's "lofty dwelling place" could refer both to the place of the sun in heaven or the place of the sacrificial fire.

A special mystery concerns the last verse of the hymn, verse 11. In 11b, following the suggestion of Geldner, we have taken Agni as the subject, and Agni's semen as the suppressed object. The reference, he suggests, is the mystery and paradox of Agni as his own father, which is also found in III.2. The image is an unusual one, but several elements of verse 11 suggest that it is Agni's semen (*rétas*) that "flows on high." First, *rétas* is both present in pāda d and suggested by √*rī* "flow" in pāda b. Second, that which is "flowing on high" in pādas ab results in Agni's birth in cd. Finally, the ellipsis of the object, which occurs between *bṛhád* / *áriṇād,* is solved in pāda d by *bhū́ri-retasā* "having abundant semen," which echoes *bṛhád* / *áriṇād* phonologically and thereby suggests "semen" as the missing object. The mystery also brings back the theme of the Agni as sun and as sacrificial fire, since the fire who is single and who makes semen flow on high is likely the sun. In any case, that theme is restated in the last lines, which identify the parents of Agni as both Heaven and Earth.

1. To honor Vaiśvānara of broad visage, our inspired words offer him treasures so that he goes upon strong supports.
   Since immortal Agni befriends the gods, therefore, from of old, he has never corrupted the foundations (of the sacrifice).
2. The wondrous messenger journeys between the two world-halves. The Hotar of Manu has taken his seat, placed to the fore.
   He attends upon his lofty dwelling place throughout the days. Bringing goods through his insight, Agni is urged on by the gods.
3. Beacon of the sacrifices, bringer of success to the ritual distribution—Agni do the inspired poets exalt with their thoughts.
   In whom they have gathered their tasks and their songs, in him the sacrificer desires to find favors.

4. The father of sacrifices and the lord of those perceiving the inspired words, Agni is the measure and pattern for the chanters.
   He has entered the two world-halves with their abundant forms. Dear to many, the poet becomes joyful through his manifestations.
5. Shimmering Agni, whose chariot is shimmering and whose commandments are golden, Vaiśvānara, who sits amid the waters and finds the sun,
   the one who sinks deep and moves swiftly, surrounded by his powers—him, ardent and very splendid, have the gods placed here.
6. Agni, who, together with the gods and with the kin of Manu, extends the much-adorned sacrifice by his insight,
   speeds between (the two worlds) as a charioteer by means of those [=the gods and the kin of Manu] who bring the offerings to success—he the lively houselord, who dispels curses.
7. O Agni, be awake to a lifetime rich with descendants (for us). Swell with nourishment, and shine refreshments on us.
   Quicken our vital powers and the (gods) on high, o you who are awake, as the fire-priest of the gods. You are the one of strong resolve for inspired words.
8. Clanlord, youthful guest, controller of insights, and fire-priest of the chanters,
   sign of the rites, and Jātavedas—him do our men ever proclaim with reverence, (for him) to give strength by his spur.
9. The far-radiant god, the great delight, Agni with his chariot and through his vast power has surrounded the settlements.
   We would attend to the commandments of him who prospers abundantly here in our house by means of our well-twisted hymns.
10. Vaiśvānara, I desire your manifestations, by which you became the one who finds the sun, o far-gazing one.
   As soon as you were born, you filled the living worlds and the two world-halves. Agni, you surround all these in your own person.
11. By the wondrous powers of Vaiśvānara and by his good work, the single poet [=Agni?] made it [=his semen?] flow on high.
   Agni was born, exalting both his parents, Heaven and the Earth, who have abundant semen.

III.4 (238) Āprī

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

One of the ten Āprī litanies found in the R̥gveda. This is one of the eleven-verse versions, with Tanūnāpāt in position 2 and no Narāśaṃsa. It is a trickier Āprī hymn

than most, in that not all the key words are overtly expressed but are implied by derivationally related (vs. 1) or phonologically similar (vs. 3) words or are simply gapped (vs. 5). For example, rather than the usual past participle *samíddha* "kindled" in the first verse, this hymn has the *āmreḍita* nominal *samít-samid* "kindling stick after kindling stick." In verse 3 *iḷáḥ* "of the milk libation" substitutes for the usual *īḍitá* "solemnly invoked," with similar phonology though they are etymologically and semantically unrelated. In verse 5 the expected Divine Doors do not appear but can be supplied with the feminine adjective *pūrvī́ḥ* "many." As usual, the key words (or their substitutes) are italicized in this translation. The final four verses are identical to VII.2.8–11.

1. *Kindling stick after kindling stick*—become favorable to us. With flame after flame, give the favor of the good one.
   Convey here the gods, o god, for the sacrifice. As our companion, favorable (to us), sacrifice to your companions, o Agni.
2. You to whom the gods—Varuṇa, Mitra, and Agni—offer sacrifice three times in a day, day after day,
   make this sacrifice to be honey-filled for us, o *Tanūnapāt*, and, with its womb of ghee, to give honor (to the gods).
3. The insight that fulfills all wishes goes forth to the Hotar [=Agni] of the *milk-libation* in order to offer sacrifice first
   and to celebrate the bull here with acts of reverence. When prompted, he will sacrifice to the gods as the superior sacrificer.
4. High above has the path for you two been created in the rite. High above have the flames advanced into the airy spaces,
   or rather the Hotar has been seated at the navel of heaven. We strew the *ritual grass* widely, providing an expanse for the gods.
5. Choosing in their mind the seven offices of the Hotar, driving everything onward, they [=the gods] return in accordance with the truth.
   They wander forth to this sacrifice through the *many (Divine Doors)*, which have excellent men [=the gods?] as their adornment and which are born at the ritual distributions.
6. Becoming joyful here, *Dawn and Night* are close by, and they both smile, though in body they have different forms,
   so that Mitra will rejoice in us, and Varuṇa, and also Indra along with the Maruts, through their great powers.
7. I direct the two foremost *Divine Hotars* downward. The seven (priests), giving strength, become exhilarated by their own will.
   Reciting the truth, they speak just the truth, reflecting upon their commandments as the protectors of commandments.
8. *Bhāratī* along with the Bhāratīs, *Iḷā* along with the gods, Agni along with the sons of Manu,
   and *Sarasvatī* along with the Sārasvatas are near: let the three *goddesses* sit here on the ritual grass.

9. O god *Tvaṣṭar*, unbind for us this flow of semen and what prospers, granting (that)
from which a hero is born, fit for action and very skilled, who yokes up the pressing stones and desires the gods.
10. O *Lord of the Forest*, send it [=the sacrificial animal] to the gods. Agni, the Śamitar, will sweeten the offering.
And it is he, the more real Hotar [=Agni], who will offer sacrifice, since he knows the births of the gods.
11. Journey near here, o Agni, as you are kindled, on the same chariot with Indra and the swift gods.
Let Aditi of good sons sit on our ritual grass. *Svāhā*! Let the immortal gods rejoice!

III.5 (239) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The address is to Agni as the fire kindled in the morning rites, whose appearance anticipates that of the dawns and the sun. His advent inspires the recitations of the priests and Agni himself grows stronger through those recitations and through the rites, if Geldner has rightly identified "the many manifestations of truth" in verse 2 as the acts of the sacrifice. The poet's major theme, though, is the identification of Agni with various deities whose functions intersect with those of Agni. In verse 4 and briefly reprised toward the end of the hymn in verse 9, Agni is Mitra, the god of alliances, because his kindling marks the re-creation of the alliance between gods and mortals through the performance of the sacrifice. Agni's identification with the Adhvaryu, the priest in charge of the action of the rite, follows from his role as Mitra. In 4d, however, the appellative sense of *mitrá* "ally" comes to the fore, and Agni is not only part of the rite and household, but the ally of the rivers and mountains, all the territories of the earth. More unusually, in verse 4 he is also identified in his form as Jātavedas as Varuṇa, the god of commandments. Neither Agni's identification as Jātavedas nor his authority to command are central to this hymn, so the introduction of Varuṇa here is the result of Varuṇa's close connection with Mitra, and Jātavedas, although normally a name of Agni, is here semiautonomous from him, like Tanūnapāt in the previous hymn.

Verses 5 and 6, occupying the mysterious middle of the hymn, are the most difficult. Verse 5ab might continue from 4d, proclaiming that the highest limits of the earth and even the sky are governed by Agni. Alternatively, the "summit's tip" could be the reach of the sacrificial fire and the track of the bird could be the track of the sun. In the latter case the verses connect two forms of Agni as the sacrificial

fire and as the sun. In verse 6 Agni is identified with another deity, Ṛbhu or the Ṛbhu, the craftsman, who, like Agni, is also a priest. The "hide of the grain" is puzzling, but as also in IV.7.7, it might refer to the ritual grass and the "track of the bird" again to Agni as the sun, appearing during the kindling of the morning sacrificial fire.

Verse 7 once more takes up the theme of the birth of Agni. His parents might be Heaven and Earth, as Sāyaṇa and other interpreters suggest, or, more likely, the two fire-churning sticks, which are Agni's new parents with his every birth. Once Agni is born, the plants—the kindling chips—nurture him and he becomes strong in the lap of his parents. Then in verse 9 Agni, now flaring up, appears both in heaven as the sun and in the sacrificial area, the navel of the earth, as the fire of the sacrifice. The poem ends with one last identification: Agni is Mātariśvan, the fire-bringer, for fire gives rise to fire.

1. In response to the dawns, the ever more visible Agni has awakened, the inspired (priest), trail-blazer for the poets.
   He of broad visage, kindled by those seeking the gods, as the draft-horse (of the oblations), has opened the doors of darkness.
2. To be revered through recitations, Agni has grown still stronger through the praises and songs of the praise singers.
   Delighting in the many manifestations of truth, the messenger has flared forth at the shining out of dawn.
3. Agni has been installed among the clans of the sons of Manu—the embryo of the waters and Mitra bringing success through the truth.
   Beloved and worthy of the sacrifice, he has mounted the back (of the altar), and has become the inspired (priest) to be invoked by our thoughts.
4. Agni becomes Mitra when he is kindled. As the Hotar, he is Mitra; as Jātavedas, Varuṇa.
   As the vigorous Adhvaryu and the lord of the household, he is Mitra, the Mitra of the rivers and mountains.
5. He protects the summit's [?] tip dear to him and the track of the bird. The young one protects the course of the sun.
   Agni protects the seven-headed (chant?) in the navel (of the sacrifice). Towering, he protects the exhilarating (soma?) of the gods.
6. The Ṛbhu [=Agni] created for himself the beloved name (of Ṛbhu) to be invoked, since he is the god who knows all the ritual patterns.
   The hide of the grain and the track of the bird, (each) covered in ghee—just that does Agni guard, never lapsing.
7. Being eager, Agni has mounted the eager womb covered in ghee and providing wide entry.
   Shining, blazing, towering, pure—again and again he has made his mother and father new.

8. As soon as he is born, he grows strong through the plants, when the fruitful (plants) make him strong with ghee.
   Like the waters appearing in beauty on their downward course, Agni makes a wide path [?] in the lap of his parents [=the fire-churning sticks].
9. Praised, the young one has flared up through his kindling, upon the summit of heaven and the navel of earth.
   To be invoked as Mitra and Mātariśvan, Agni as messenger will convey the gods to the sacrifice.
10. Towering, Agni has propped up the vault of the sky through his kindling, becoming the highest of the lights,
   when Mātariśvan kindled him hiding from the Bhr̥gus, conveying the oblation.
11. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
   There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.6 (240) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

From its beginning, this hymn signals Agni's dual roles as priest and ritual fire and as fire on earth and fire among the gods. The first verse contains a sustained śleṣa, a word, or in this case a gapped word, with a double sense. The gapped feminine noun is probably the *juhū́*, the sacrificial ladle with which the butter offerings are poured in the fire. But she can also be the tongue of the poet—not so incidentally, another meaning of the word *juhū́*—or even the speech of the poets. If one of the two latter, then *dakṣiṇāvā́ṭ* can mean not or not only "conveying to the right" but also, as Geldner suggests, "conveying the priestly gift" (dakṣiṇā) to the Hotar Agni. Similarly, in verse 2, the draft-horses are primarily the flames of Agni, but they can also be the priests of the sacrifices.

From verse 3 the poet launches into his principal theme: the position of Agni himself as the intermediary between gods and humans, himself a kind of divine śleṣa, who is simultaneously a Hotar for humans and a Hotar for the gods. The references to Heaven and Earth (vss. 3, 4) or to the "two world-halves" (vss. 5, 10) point toward his role as intermediary between earth and heaven. Similarly, in verse 7 Agni appears as both the heavenly fire, the sun, and as the earthly fire of the sacrifice. Reflecting his double manifestation, the first line of this verse could mean that Agni shines either as the earthly fire "to heaven" or as the sun "from heaven."

1. O praise-poets, twisting around in your mind, lead forth the one [=the sacrificial ladle] who is turned toward the gods, as you serve the gods;
   conveying (offerings) toward the right, the prizewinning mare goes to the east, bringing the offering to Agni, (she who is) rich in ghee.
2. You filled the two world-halves as you were born, and now you, o you who seek the first offerings, have surpassed
   even the heaven and the earth by your greatness, o Agni. Let your draft-horses with their seven tongues twist around.
3. Heaven and Earth and the (gods) worthy of the sacrifice set you down as the Hotar for the house,
   when the clans of the sons of Manu, serving the gods and bearing pleasing oblations, summon your gleaming flame.
4. Taking pleasure, the great one is set down here in his enduring abode between Heaven and Earth, the two great ones,
   who are united cowives, unaging and indestructible, the two nectar-yielding milk-cows of the wide-ranging (Agni).
5. Great are the commandments of you who are great, o Agni. Through your will you extend throughout the two world-halves.
   You became the messenger as you were born. You are the leader of the different peoples, o bull.
6. Or place your own two long-maned (horses) of truth, sorrels bathed in ghee, on the yoke-pole with the harness ropes.
   Then convey all the gods here, o god. Perform good rites, Jātavedas.
7. Your shining rays shine here even to heaven; you become radiant along with the many far-radiant dawns,
   when, o Agni, the gods marvel at your busy burning at will among the wood, (the burning) by the delightful Hotar.
8. Whether (they be) the gods who rejoice in the broad midspace or those who are in the luminous realm of heaven,
   or those who are helpers, easily invoked and belonging to the sacrifice—their chariot horses guided themselves here, o Agni—
9. With these, o Agni, journey here near to us on the same chariot, or on a different chariot, for your horses are wide-ranging.
   Convey here the three and thirty gods along with their wives, in accordance with your own will; make then rejoice!.
10. He is the Hotar, whose every sacrifice even the two broad world-halves welcome in order to make it strong.
    Turned eastward like two rites stand the two well-supported (world-halves), the two truth-possessing (parents) of truth-begotten (Agni), the two real ones.
11. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
    There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.7 (241) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Geldner describes this as a deliberately obscure morning hymn. The poet creates this obscurity by rarely directly identifying the objects concerned, but rather referring to them through metaphors, especially of mares and bulls. One reason the poet chooses this approach may be because he is simultaneously describing and thus interconnecting three realities relevant to the morning ritual: the priests and their activity, the appearance of the sacrificial fire and thus of the god Agni, and the rising of the sun, which is another form of Agni.

Neither space nor certainty allows us to unpack all of the poet's metaphors, but the following brief discussion of a few can illustrate the complexity and possibilities of the poet's imagery. Geldner suggests that the seven voices in verse 1 may be the seven rivers (as in III.1.6), but they might also be the voices of the seven priests of the soma rite. Agni's "mother and father" might be Earth and Heaven—especially since his parents are probably Heaven and Earth in pāda c. But they could also be the two fire-churning sticks, the *áráṇi*s, in which case *mātárā* might better be "the two mothers." If the *mātárā* are both Earth and Heaven and the churning sticks, then the poet may be deliberately exploiting the paradox that Agni, the ritual fire, is the child of the churning sticks, and Agni, perhaps as the sun, is the child of Heaven and Earth. In verse 2 Sāyaṇa among others reasonably understands the mares to be the waters, but we suggest that they might be, or again also be, Agni's flames or rays of the sun. If we follow these latter interpretations, then the "single cow" might be the sun, although this identification is doubtful since the sun is not otherwise a cow or even female. The choice of such an image for the sun, if it is such, might have been motivated by the image of the flames as mares and milk-cows. Alternatively, Geldner thinks the single cow is probably the sacrificial ladle, which is certainly possible. The "seers," who are the likely subject in verse 5 and who appear again in verse 7, may be the *saptarṣayaḥ* "seven seers," the seven stars of the Big Dipper, and in both verses they may also be the seven priests of the soma rite. As Kiehnle (1979: 83) has observed, it is because they may be stars in verse 7 that *vípra* "inspired" can also have the more literal sense of "quivering," that is, "twinkling." Also in verse 7 the young bulls may be the flames of Agni (so Oldenberg) or possibly the flames of the rising sun (Kiehnle).

1. Those (flames) that have gone forth from the wellspring of white-backed
 (Agni) have entered his mother and father and the seven voices.
 The encircling father and mother [=Heaven and Earth] travel in tandem;
 the two stretch far and wide to display their long lifetime.

2. The mares [=the flames?] of the bull, the ruler of heaven [=the sun], are milk-cows; he took his place upon these goddesses, who convey that filled with honey.
   The single cow travels her course around you, who dwell peacefully in the seat of truth.
3. He mounted upon them that become easy to guide as their watchful lord and as the wealth-finder of wealth.
   The blue-backed (Agni), whose faces are manyfold, made them dwell apart from the wellspring of the brushwood.
4. Nourishing the unaging son of Tvaṣṭar greatly, the carriers [=fingers of the priests?] carry him [=the newborn fire], who stands fast.
   Flaring out with his limbs in his abode, he entered the two world-halves as if they were one woman.
5. They [=the seers?] know the benevolence of the flame-red bull, and they find joy in the command of the copper-colored one—
   they, the shining ones, shining from heaven and brightly shining, to whose flock belong the milk-libation and the great song.
6. And by their knowledge, following his sound, they led their thunderous (sound) to his father and mother, the great (parents) of great (Agni),
   when at night the young bull grew strong all around his (fire)place along the domain of a singer.
7. With the five Adhvaryus, the seven inspired ones protect the dear hidden track of the bird.
   Turned forward, the young, unaging bulls [=flames?] become exhilarated, for gods follow the commandments of the gods.
8. I direct the two foremost divine Hotars downward. The seven (priests), giving strength, become exhilarated by their own will.
   Reciting the truth, they speak just the truth, reflecting upon their commandments as the protectors of commandments.
9. The many (mares) [=flames?] act like bulls for the great steed [=Agni or the sun]; their reins [=rays of light] are easy to guide for the shimmering bull.
   O god and Hotar, as the most delighting and watchful, convey the great gods and the two world-halves here to this place.
10. O Wealth—the dawns, owning the fortifying first offerings, receiving the beautiful words, bearing lovely beacons, have dawned richly.
    And now, o Agni, by the greatness of earth, for the sake of our great (fortune), be favorable even to the (ritual) fault we have committed.
11. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
    There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.8 (242) Sacrificial Post(s)

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 3, 7

Though this hymn is found in the middle of the Agni collection, it is dedicated to the Sacrificial Post (*yūpa*), to which the animal to be sacrificed is tied. It is not entirely clear why it has been inserted here, though as an eleven-verse hymn consisting mostly of triṣṭubhs it comes at the end of the triṣṭubh hymns to Agni and is preceded by two likewise eleven-verse hymns.

The structure of the hymn has been illuminatingly discussed by Theodore Proferes (2003b), who shows that not only does it fall into two separate parts devoted to the single post (1–5) and multiple posts (6–10) respectively, as is already indicated by the Anukramaṇī, but that the two halves are entirely parallel in phraseology and structure. Originally there were probably two hymns, each appropriate to a different ritual situation (one sacrificial animal versus several). They were put together and a final benedictory verse was added (11), and then it was inserted into the Agni cycle.

The ritual action depicted in both parts is the erecting, anointing, and wrapping of the posts; there is no mention of the sacrificial animal.

1. Those seeking the gods anoint you at the ceremony, o Lord of the Forest, with heavenly honey.
   When you will stand erect, after that establish material goods here—or when you will dwell peacefully in the lap of this mother [=Earth].
2. Being propped in front of the kindled (fire), gaining the unaging formulation that provides good heroes,
   thrusting heedlessness to a distance from us, rise up for great good fortune.
3. Rise up, Lord of the Forest, upon the height of the earth.
   Being founded with a good founding, establish luster for the one whose vehicle is the sacrifice.
4. As a youth, richly dressed, engirded, he has come here. He becomes more splendid as he is being born.
   Him do the insightful, very attentive poets lead upward, seeking the gods with their mind.
5. Once born, he is born (again) on the brightest day of days, growing strong at the encounter, at the rite.
   The insightful, industrious ones purify (him) with inspired thought. Beseeching the gods, the poet raises his voice.

6. Those of you whom the god-seeking men have fixed down, or, Lord of the Forest, whom the axe has fashioned,
   let those god(like) sacrificial posts, standing there, be disposed to place a treasure consisting of offspring in us.

7. Those who, hewn, are on the earth, or have been fixed down in it, or over whom the offering ladles have been outstretched,
   let them pursue a thing of value for us among the gods, assuring success to the cultivated lands.
8. The Ādityas, Rudras, Vasus of good guidance, Heaven and Earth, the Broad One, the Midspace—
   let the gods in concert help our sacrifice. Let them make the beacon of the ceremony erect.
9. Like geese, taking their places in a row, wearing gleaming (garments) the posts have come here to us.
   Being led upward by the poets in front, the gods go into the fold of the gods.
10. Just like the horns of horned beasts they appear—the posts, with their knobs, (standing) on the earth.
    Or listening attentively at the competing invocation by the cantors, let (the gods) help us at the battle drives.

11. Lord of the Forest, grow forth with a hundred branches—with a thousand branches may we grow forth—
    you whom this axe here, on being sharpened, has led forth for great good fortune.

III.9 (243) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The setting of the poem is the kindling of Agni in the very early morning (cf. vs. 7). Thematically, the poet parallels the gods' search for Agni and the human priests' kindling of fire. The fire has disappeared into the waters or into the wood, which has absorbed the waters. Therefore, it is in the waters that the "watchful and undeceiving ones," either priests or gods, have found him. The double reference is particularly well expressed in verse 5. The first part of the verse alludes to the myth of Agni's flight from the gods and to the myth of Mātariśvan, who brings the fire from heaven. But the final phrase *devébhyo mathitám pári*, here translated "stolen from among the gods," could also mean "churned from among the gods." That is, it likely refers to the priestly act of creating fire by friction as well as to the story of Mātariśvan's bringing fire.

1. As your companions, we mortals have chosen you, a god, to help—
   you, the Child of the Waters, sharing good fortune, shining brightly, strongly advancing, faultless.

2. Since desiring the trees, you went to your mothers, the waters,
   therefore your return is not to be ignored, o Agni, since, though being far away, you have come to be here.
3. You have grown beyond the acrid (smoke), and so now you are benevolent.
   The ones [=priests or flames] go farther and farther forth; the others [=other priests or flames] remain around—those in whose companionship you rest.
4. Him who had gone beyond failures, beyond the ever-parched places—
   him did the watchful and undeceiving ones find resting in the waters like a lion.
5. Agni, hidden thus, as if he had run away on his own—
   him did Mātariśvan lead here from the far distance, stolen from among the gods.
6. You are he whom mortals seized, o you who convey oblations to the gods,
   since you, son of Manu, guard all sacrifices according to your resolve, youngest one.
7. This is auspicious—your wondrous skill appears good even to a simple man—
   that the herd sits together around you, o Agni, when you are kindled at night's boundary.
8. Pour an offering to him who makes the rite good, sharp (Agni) of pure flame.
   Obediently serve the swift messenger, the quick, the ancient one to be summoned, the god.
9. Three hundred and three thousand, thirty and nine gods served Agni.
   They sprinkled him with ghee and they strewed ritual grass for him. Then they seated him as their Hotar.

III.10 (244) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: uṣṇih

The hymn is in praise of Agni as he is kindled and installed as the Hotar in the rite. Because the Hotar recites the hymns in the ritual and because this hymn emphasizes Agni's role as Hotar, the poet also connects ritual speech and Agni, in particular, the speech that addresses him and that he can appreciate and inspire as the Hotar. Again in accordance with Agni's role as Hotar, the poet emphasizes Agni's skill as a priest and his ability to rectify any failures in the rite. In verse 7, which mentions such failures, *ví rājasi* means both "shine in every direction" and "rule in every direction." Both, of course, would fit the context.

Oldenberg suggests that this hymn (as well as the next two) may be organized into tr̥cas. The extractions of triplets from these hymns in ritual performance and in the Sāmaveda also speak in favor of tr̥cas, although not all tr̥cas in the later tradition correspond to tr̥cas in the original hymns. So, for example, as Oldenberg points out, III.11.5, 7, 6 form a tr̥ca in the Sāmaveda, but they have a different order and cross a tr̥ca boundary in the R̥gveda.

1. You, o Agni, the sovereign king over the peoples,
   you a god do mortals of inspired thought kindle in the rite.
2. You do they summon as priest at the sacrifices and as Hotar, o Agni.
   Shine as the herdsman of truth in your own house.
3. He who will ritually serve you, o Jātavedas, with the kindling wood,
   he, o Agni, receives an abundance of heroes, and he prospers.
4. The beacon of the rites, Agni will come with the gods,
   being anointed by the seven Hotars for the sake of him who brings the offering.
5. Bring forward the first lofty speech for the Hotar, for Agni,
   as if for a ritual master who brings the lights of inspirations.
6. Let our songs strengthen Agni—those from which he is born, worthy to be hymned,
   as the one lovely to see, for the great prize and for great wealth.
7. O Agni, as the best sacrificer in the rite, sacrifice to the gods for him seeking the gods.
   As the delighting Hotar, you rule in every direction beyond failures.
8. O pure one, shine upon us a brilliant abundance of heroes.
   Be very near to the praise singers for their well-being.
9. Admiring, inspired poets, being awake, kindle you,
   the conveyor of oblations, immortal and strength-increasing.

III.11 (245) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: gāyatrī

The theme of the hymn is Agni as the intermediary between gods and mortals. So in verse 2, for example, he is a fire-priest like a human, but as a god he is immortal; he is the messenger placed on earth with mortals for the delight of the gods. The image of Agni as a chariot in verse 5 is unusual and striking, and because it is so and because it is located in the hymn's central verse, it dominates the hymn. It finds echoes in the descriptions of Agni as the "conveyor" (vss. 2, 4), as "overpowering all attacks" (vs. 6), and as piled high with "well-placed" ritual offerings and hymns for the gods (vs. 8)—these are the likely "things" of Agni mentioned in the verse—and with "desirable things" for mortals (vs. 9). The image of the chariot is also

reflected in the description of the sacrificer journeying to both "pleasing offerings" and Agni's "dwelling place" (vs. 7). Indeed, the *vā́has*, the sacrificer's "vehicle" in verse 7, is probably none other than Agni himself, who is described by the cognates *havya-váh* and *váhni*.

1. Agni is the Hotar of the rite, who is placed to the fore, who is without boundaries:
   he knows the sacrifice in its proper order.
2. The conveyor of oblations, the immortal fire-priest, and the messenger placed for delight,
   Agni through insight assembles (the sacrifice).
3. Agni—through insight he becomes visible as the ancient beacon of the sacrifice,
   for his is a surpassing goal.
4. Agni, the son of strength famed of old, Jātavedas—
   him the gods made their conveyor (of oblations).
5. The undeceivable leader of the clans of the sons of Manu is Agni,
   who is the swift chariot, ever new.
6. Who overpowers all attacks as the indestructible resolve of the gods,
   Agni is the best of those of mighty fame.
7. A ritually dedicated mortal attains through his vehicle the pleasing offerings
   and the dwelling place (of Agni), whose flames are pure.
8. Through our thoughts we would fully attain all the well-placed things of Agni;
   we inspired poets (would attain those) of Jātavedas.
9. O Agni, we shall gain all desirable things among the prizes of victory.
   In you the gods have placed them.

III.12 (246) Indra and Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina.
9 verses: gāyatrī

The poet invites Indra and Agni to drink the soma at the morning soma offering. The two gods are not only invoked together, but the poet also ascribes the acts distinctive of each god to both. After invoking them in the 2nd person in the first two verses, in the third verse he refers to them in the 3rd person and then, especially in verses 4 and 6, tells of the great deeds that belong to both of them. In verse 4 they are both "smashers of obstacles," for while Indra is the "smasher of obstacles" or "smasher of Vr̥tra," Agni also burns his way through obstacles (e.g., VI.16.34). Indra is the god who famously breaks the fortifications of the Dāsas, but in verse 6 Agni also destroys enemies' fortifications, as in III.15.4. In verse 8 "crossing the waters" belongs to the two of them as well. As Geldner remarks, this last is

probably a reference to a victorious march across rivers that is led by the sacrifice, represented by Agni, and by warriors, represented by Indra.

1. Indra and Agni! Come to the pressed soma, to the cloud worthy to be chosen, through our songs.
   Urged on by our insight, drink of this.
2. Indra and Agni! The sacrifice of the singer goes (to you two) jointly, being worthy of your attention.
   By this (insight), drink this pressed soma.
3. I choose Indra and Agni, the two who appear as sage poets with the spur of our sacrifice.
   So let those two satisfy themselves here with the soma.
4. I invoke the streaming smashers of obstacles, ever-conquering, never conquered
   Indra and Agni, best winners of victory's prize.
5. The singers with their recitations, knowing the (poetic) devices, chant forth to you two.
   Indra and Agni, I choose your refreshments.
6. Indra and Agni! You shook the ninety fortifications, lorded over by Dāsas,
   at one time with a single act.
7. Indra and Agni! From our (ritual) work our insights go forth toward (you)
   along the paths of truth.
8. Indra and Agni! Mighty are your abodes and your pleasing offerings.
   The crossing of the waters has been ordained for you two.
9. Indra and Agni! You encompass the lights of heaven among your prizes of victory.
   This heroic deed of yours has become revealed.

III.13 (247) Agni

Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

This is the first hymn of this collection attributed not to Viśvāmitra, but to his son, Ṛṣabha. Its theme is Agni as the god who inspires the recitations of the priests. As such, Agni possesses the truth that the hymns express (vs. 2), and he himself is both an inspired poet (vs. 3) and the Hotar priest (vs. 5). As he is kindled, he becomes increasingly bright and the hymn connects his visible brilliance with the brilliance of mind he inspires (vss. 5–6) and finally even the brilliance of the gift he wins for the sacrificers (vs. 7).

1. Chant forth for you all the loftiest (chant) to him, the god Agni.
   He will come to us with the gods, and as the best sacrificer he will sit here upon the ritual grass.

2. He possessing the truth, whose skill the two world-halves and (the gods') help follow—
   him do those bringing offerings summon, him do those striving to win (summon) for help.
3. As inspired poet, he is the controller of these (bringing offerings); he is (the controller) of sacrifices. Because he is so,
   befriend for yourselves Agni, who gives and gains bounty.
4. Let Agni extend to us shelters that best bring luck in order (for us) to pursue (the gods)—
   (shelters) from where he will shower here the goods in heaven and in the waters for the sake of our settlements.
5. The shining one who has none before him, Agni, together with his good insights,
   do the verse-reciters kindle as their Hotar and as the clanlord of the clans.
6. And you will help us in our sacred formulation and in our recitations as the best of those that invoke the gods.
   Growing strong through the Maruts, flame up as our good luck, Agni, since you best win thousands (of cattle).
7. And now give us the good that brings thousands, that brings offspring, that brings prosperity,
   and that brings a brilliant abundance of heroes, o Agni, that is highest and never diminished.

III.14 (248) Agni

Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn describes and praises Agni as the master of the sacrifice. The first verse announces this theme, describing Agni as the Hotar and the "real sacrificer and best of sages." In the first verse the poet also mentions Agni's "chariot of lightning" by which he speeds to the sacrifice, and he then returns to the image of the chariot in the last verse. In that final verse, however, the "chariot" is, as often, the sacrifice itself. The last verse, therefore, takes the role of Agni as priest and the description of Agni as having a "chariot of lightning" in verse 1 and combines them in the image of chariot as sacrifice.

1. The delighting Hotar has taken his stand upon the ritual divisions: as the real sacrificer and best of sages, he is the master of the rite.
   Agni, the son of strength, with chariot of lightning and hair of flame, has rested his countenance upon the earth.
2. It has been offered to you—take pleasure in (this) recitation of homage—to you, who perceive it, o you who possess truth and strength.
   As one who knows, convey here the knowing (gods). Sit down in the middle upon the ritual grass to help us, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice.

3. Let dawn and night, racing to the prize, run to you, o Agni, here along the paths of the wind.
   When (the priests) anoint him as the first with their (butter-)offerings, those two stand in the house as if upon a chariot-box.
4. O Agni, possessor of strength, to you Mitra and Varuṇa and all the Maruts chant of your favor,
   so that you will stand upright with your flame, o son of strength, spreading out the settlements, a sun (spreading out) men.
5. Since today we have given you your desire, having reverently approached with hands outstretched,
   sacrifice to the gods by means of your most sacrificially skillful mind, being our inspired priest with faultless thought, o Agni.
6. Since from you, son of strength, a god's many forms of help go outward, and outward (also go) the prizes of victory,
   give us real wealth consisting of thousands through your undeceiving speech, Agni.
7. For you, o Skill with a poet's purpose, are these things that we mortals, o god, have done in the rite.
   Be aware of everyone whose chariot [=sacrifice] is good. Sweeten everything here, immortal Agni.

III.15 (249) Agni

Utkīla Kātya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This and the next hymn are attributed to Utkīla Kātya, the grandson of Viśvāmitra. The hymn describes the morning fire, who is the protector and guide of the sacrificers. Some of the language in the hymn is evocative of Indra, although Indra is never mentioned. A possible oblique reference to Indra, however, might help us understand verse 4, the central and most puzzling verse in the hymn. There Agni is invoked as an "invincible bull" who conquers fortresses, a description that strongly evokes Indra, since it is Indra (or twice Soma acting as Indra) who is *áṣāḷha* "invincible," and it is Indra who characteristically breaks open fortresses. This overlay of the image of Indra onto Agni may explain some of the complications in the second half of the verse. In cd Agni is surely the "leader of the sacrifice," but then who is the *pāyú,* the "protector" whom he also leads? If he is the leader of the sacrifice, Agni himself should be its protector as well. For this reason Oldenberg suggested emending the text so that "protector" is a subject parallel to "leader." But if we accept the text as transmitted and translate "leader of its protector" rather than "leader and protector," could Agni lead Agni? Possibly he could, if the first Agni were the priest Agni and the second were Agni as the embodiment of Indra, as suggested in the first half of the verse. Or the poet may also be punning on *pāyú*, which

means "protector" here as elsewhere (cf. VII.37.8), but which formally and secondarily—though only secondarily—could be derived from √*pā* "drink" and mean "drinker," a natural description of soma-drinking Indra. In short, the appearance of Agni could be or could mark the appearance of Indra.

1. Ever-blazing everywhere with your broad countenance, press against hostilities, demons, and afflictions.
   I would be under the shelter of the lofty one who gives good shelter, under the guidance of easily invoked Agni.
2. You at the breaking of this dawn, you at the rising of the sun—become our herdsman!
   Take pleasure in my praise song as (you would) in your own birth, as in your own lineage, o Agni, well born in your own body.
3. You, drawing the gaze of men—(be radiant) through many (dawns), o bull. Flame-red, o Agni—be radiant amid dark (nights).
   O good (Agni), lead us and take us across narrow straits. Make us, your fire-priests, to have wealth, youngest one.
4. Shine, Agni, as the invincible bull having conquered all the fortresses and their good possessions,
   and as the leader of the sacrifice and of its foremost, lofty protector, o Jātavedas of good guidance.
5. Your shelters are many and unbreakable, o singer [=Agni?]. As one very wise, shining up to the gods,
   like a winning chariot convey (us) to victory's prize. Agni, (convey) us to the well-supported world-halves.
6. O bull, swell and quicken for us victory's prizes and the milk-yielding world-halves, o Agni,
   since you are aflame with good flame, o god with the gods. Let not a mortal's evil intent hem us in.
7. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
   There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.16 (250) Agni

Utkīla Kātya
6 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

The hymn consists of pragātha distichs of one bṛhatī verse and one satobṛhatī verse. The metrics thus organize the verses into three pairs. Structurally, however, the poet also emphasizes the unity of the hymn through ring composition: verse 1 refers to Agni as the master of *saúbhaga* "good fortune" and of *rayí* "wealth," and verse 6 to him as *subhága* "bearer of good fortune" and the agent of "wealth."

Once again, as in the preceding hymn, the description of Agni evokes Indra, especially in verse 1, which refers to Agni as the "master of the smashing of obstacles," and in verse 2, in which the poet calls on the troops of Indra, the Maruts, to follow Agni.

1. This Agni is master of heroes in abundance and of great good fortune.
   He is master of wealth consisting in good descendants and cattle. He is master of the smashing of obstacles.
2. Follow this one, you superior men, you Maruts, to strengthen him, in whom are riches that grow strong with kindness,
   that overcome those of evil intent in battles, and that every day swindle his rival.

3. Sharpen us for a share of wealth with an abundance of heroes, o generous Agni,
   o you of mighty brilliance—(wealth) reaching the highest, bringing offspring, free from affliction, and bursting forth.
4. Who creates and overwhelms all living beings, who creates friendship here among the gods,
   he takes his place here among the gods, here amid an abundance of heroes, and here in the praise of men.

5. Agni, do not subject us to lack of thought nor to lack of heroes,
   nor to lack of cattle, o son of strength, nor to scorn. Put hostilities away from here.
6. Show a mastery over victory's prize that brings offspring, o bearer of good fortune, and that is lofty in the rite, o Agni.
   Join us with greater wealth that is delight and brings glory, o you of powerful brilliance.

III.17 (251) Agni

Kata Vaiśvāmitra
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn invokes the present sacrificial fire, the present Agni, as the reappearance of the ancient Hotar who performed the sacrifice. The hymn emphasizes the centrality of Agni in the sacrifice by insistently using different derivatives of √*yaj* "sacrifice" in four of its five verses: verse 1 has *suyajñáḥ, yajáthāya*; verse 2, *ā́yajaḥ, yakṣi, yajñám*; verse 3, *yakṣi*, *yájamānāya*; and verse 5, *yájīyān, yajā*. Strikingly, verse 4 has no derivative of √*yaj*, but rather is the direct proclamation of Agni's becoming the intermediary between gods and mortals and the source of life for both.

Verse 1 contains a pun, since *aktúbhiḥ* can mean both "with unguents" and "through the nights." Verse 3 is also complicated because the key word, *ājā́nī*, is a R̥gvedic hapax. It could mean "birth" and *uṣásaḥ* could be genitive singular, which could yield either "your three births belong to Dawn" or, less likely, "three are the births of Dawn." Or *ājā́nī* could mean "birth-giver" or "birth" and *uṣásaḥ* could be nominative plural, giving "the three dawns are your births or birth-givers." As Geldner points out, in favor of "three dawns" is the fact that three dawns also appear in VIII.41.3. In none of the possibilities is the interpretation of the half-verse transparent. In the last verse, however, there is a direct reference to the Agni of the past and the Agni of the present, so perhaps verse 3 refers to Agnis of the past, present, and future.

1. Being kindled according to his first foundations, he who fulfills all wishes is anointed with unguents—
   he, the flame-haired, ghee-cloaked, purifying Agni, who makes the sacrifice good—in order to sacrifice to the gods.
2. Just as you performed the sacrificial role of the Hotar of the Earth, o Agni, and just as you observantly (performed that) of the Heaven, Jātavedas,
   so sacrifice to the gods with this offering. Like Manu, carry out this sacrifice today.
3. Three lifetimes are yours, Jātavedas, and three dawns are your births, o Agni.
   By these (births) win the help of the gods by sacrifice as the knowing one, and then become luck and life for the sacrificer.
4. Singing to Agni, the one beautifully shining, beautifully appearing, we revere you who are to be invoked, Jātavedas.
   You have the gods made the messenger, the spoked wheel (of flames), the conveyor of oblations, and the navel of immortality.
5. The Hotar, the better sacrificer before you, o Agni, who once again will take his seat and (be) the one who is good luck by his own will,
   according to his foundations, carry forth the sacrifice, o you who are observant, and set the rite in place for us in pursuit of the gods.

III.18 (252) Agni

Kata Vaiśvāmitra
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This is a hymn in praise of the fire as it gains strength. The first two verses look forward to the fire's blaze, which should be directed against the enemies of the sacrificers. The third and middle verse turns to the ritual acts that cause the fire to increase—adding fuel to it, offering melted butter into it, and even pouring praise

upon it. The last two verses then again describe the blazing fire, but this time the increasing blaze is not turned against enemies but rather represents and effects the increasing strength and wealth of the sacrificers.

1. Become benevolent toward us, Agni, at our reverent approach, bringing success (to us), like a companion to his companion, like a father and mother.
   Since the dwelling places of the peoples have many deceptions, burn against the hostilities turned against us.
2. Scorch our near enemies, Agni. Scorch the recitation of the distant, ungenerous one.
   And scorch the invisible ones as you become more visible, good (Agni). Let your unaging, irrepressible (flames) spread out.
3. With kindling wood and ghee, o Agni, seeking, I pour an oblation for endurance and strength.
   Insofar as I am master by my ritual formulation, offering praise (by it), (I pour) this divine insight in order to win hundreds.
4. (Flame) up with your flame, son of strength, when you are praised. Set rising vigor upon those toiling;
   (set) rich (vigor) upon the Viśvāmitras, o Agni, for their luck and life. We have groomed your body many times.
5. Create wealth, o you who are good at winning the stakes—when kindled, you become just that, o Agni;
   (create) rich (vigor) in the house of the praise singer of good fortune. You have acquired glossy forearms and wondrous forms.

III.19 (253) Agni

Gāthin Kauśika
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This is the first of a small collection of hymns, III.19–22, attributed to Gāthin, the son of Kuśika. According to the Sarvānukramaṇī, Gāthin was the father of Viśvāmitra, although in III.33.5 Viśvāmitra calls himself a son of Kuśika.

In general, the hymn is similar to IV.6. See especially verse 2, which has many of the same themes and much of the same vocabulary as IV.6.3. Its most obvious structural feature is the ring defined by 1a and 5a. One difference between the two lines, however, is that the poet chooses Agni in verse 1, but the gods anoint Agni in verse 5. This change echoes the shifts throughout the hymn between the priests and Agni. In verse 2ab first "I" perform a ritual offering to Agni, and then in cd Agni performs a ritual act. Verse 3 begins as if it is still describing Agni, especially if the gapped verb is *sám* √*śri* "provide" from 2d, but

by the end of the first line the subject needs to be read as the priest. In 3b the action of both Agni and the priest is characterized as "striving." In verse 4 the people performing the ritual are "eager to sacrifice," but it is Agni who "will sacrifice." This shifting between humans and the god Agni signifies the closing gap between humans and the gods.

The hymn also contains two problematic ellipses. As mentioned above, 3a gaps the verb, and although we have supplied "provide," this is not the only possibility. In verse 2 because of another ellipsis there is some ambiguity about the ritual act that the "I" performs. By the end of the hemistich the reference to the sacrificial ladle, the *juhū́*, is fairly clear, but initially what is sent to Agni could be *vā́c* "speech" or *suṣṭutí* "good praise" (vs. 3) or the like, accompanied by offerings (e.g., X.188.2 *prá… iyarmi suṣṭutím*).

1. I choose Agni as the Hotar at the ritual meal—him, the clever poet, knowing all, never fooled.
   As the better sacrificer, he will sacrifice for us at the divine assembly. For wealth and victory's prize, he will win reward.
2. I send forth to you here, o Agni, (the ladle) filled with offerings, beautifully bright, full of gifts, and covered with ghee.
   Making respectful circumambulation before the divine assembly, being chosen (as Hotar), he has provided the sacrifice with gifts and with good (gods).
3. He (provides it) with very sharp thought when helped by you, and so strive for good descendants for him who strives.
   Agni, may we and our good praises be in an excess of wealth filled with the best of men, (an excess) of the good.
4. Since the peoples eager to sacrifice have established in you [=the fire] the many faces of (you) the god, Agni,
   convey here the assembly of the gods, o youngest one, when you will sacrifice to the multitude of gods today.
5. When the gods will anoint you as the Hotar at the ritual meal, seating you for the sacrifice,
   become our helper here, Agni. Set fame upon our persons.

III.20 (254) Agni and the All Gods

Gāthin Kauśika
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins by naming deities of the morning, although in the last verse the poet brings all the gods into his invocation. As in the previous hymn, the poet employs ring composition, a point that the Anukramaṇī underscores by assigning the address in both the first verse and the last verse not to Agni but to the All Gods.

Also once again, the poet varies the first and last verses. Every verse except the last one begins with "Agni." But in that last verse Dadhikrā is transposed in front of Agni. It is difficult to see if the poet has a purpose in mind other than marking the last verse through this shift.

However, fronting Dadhikrā, who is a deified horse, does underscore a return to the equine imagery that opens the hymn. In verse 1 the poet not only mentions the horse Dadhikrā and the two horsemen, the Aśvins, but he also calls the reciting priest a *váhni*, a chariot-driver, whose horses may be his recitations, as Geldner suggests. Then verse 2 refers to Agni's *vā́jinā*, here translated "victorious charges." The meaning of the word is not certain, but it is in any case derived from *vājín* "racehorse" or "prizewinning horse." Overt references to horses and racing then subside until the last verse.

1. Agni, Dawn, the two Aśvins, Dadhikrā—with his recitations the chariot-driver calls upon them at daybreak.
   Let the gods of good light, bellowing all together toward the rite, hear us.
2. Agni, three are your victorious charges, three your abodes. Three are your tongues [=flames], o you who are born of truth, (and these three are) many,
   and three are your bodies [=the three sacrificial fires], won by the gods. Never lapsing, protect our songs with these.
3. Agni, numerous are the names of you, the immortal one, o Jātavedas, o god of independent will,
   and, o you who propel everything, (yours are) the many wiles of the wily (gods), which they have assembled in you, o you about whose kinship people ask.
4. Agni is the leader of the heavenly settlements like Bhaga—he, the god who drinks according to [/protects] the ritual sequence, who possesses the truth.
   The smasher of Vr̥tra from of old, having every possession, will take the singer across all difficulties.
5. Dadhikrā, Agni, and the goddess Dawn; Br̥haspati and the god Savitar;
   the Aśvins, Mitra and Varuṇa, and Bhaga; the Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas—I call upon them here.

III.21 (255) Agni

Gāthin Kauśika
5 verses: triṣṭubh 1, 4; anuṣṭubh 2–3; satobr̥hatī 5

Oldenberg judges this to be not so much a hymn as a collection of verses composed in various meters. In his earlier translation of the Agni hymns, however, he does

note that at least the last two verses "seem to form a distich of an irregular pragātha type." On the other hand, Geldner observes that TB III 6.7 includes the whole of the hymn in the animal sacrifice among the *stokīyā* verses that accompany the dripping fat from the vapā, the omentum, while it is being roasted, and Elizarenkova (1995: 116) further proposes that the different meters of the verses reflect the irregular rhythm of the drops as they fall. Whether it originated as a verse collection or it constitutes a unified composition, the hymn does center on the dripping fat of an animal sacrifice. The hymn mentions *médas* "fat" in every verse but one, and even puns on *médas* in verse 4 by referring to Agni as *médhira* "wise."

1. Place this our sacrifice among the immortals. Take pleasure in these oblations, Jātavedas.
   Eat of the drops of fat and of ghee, o Agni, our Hotar, taking your seat as the first.
2. Filled with ghee, drops of fat drip for you, o pure one.
   O you on your own foundation, set in place for us the best thing, the thing to be chosen, in order for us to pursue the gods.
3. For you, the inspired poet, o Agni, are the drops dripping with ghee, o companion.
   As the best seer you are kindled. Become the helper of our sacrifice.
4. For you drip the drops of fat and of ghee, o independent and capable Agni.
   Proclaimed by poets, you have come with your lofty radiance. Take pleasure in the oblations, wise one.
5. We present to you the most powerful fat [=the vapā], extracted from the middle (of the animal's body).
   The drops drip for you upon your skin, o good one. Capture them (for) each god in turn.

III.22 (256) Purīṣya Agnis

Gāthin Kauśika
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 4

Like the surrounding hymns, the Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to Gāthin, although, as Geldner notes, TS V.2.3.3 names Viśvāmitra as the poet. Verse 5 is the frequent final verse in the Viśvāmitra hymns (cf. III.1.23, 5.11, 6.11, 7.11, 15.7, 23.5).

Both the Black and White Yajurvedic traditions employ the hymn in the Agnicayana rite (TS IV.2.4.2, VS XII.47–50) at the consecration and laying of the bricks of the fire altar. Geldner suggests that this application of the hymn may have resulted from a misunderstanding of the phrase *purīṣyā̀so agnáyaḥ* in verse 4, here

translated “the fires from their overflowing source,” but traditionally interpreted in the context of the Agnicayana to mean “the fires of the mud” (cf. ŚB VI.3.2.9 *pr̥thivyā́ḥ sadhásthād agním purīṣyàm . . . ā́bhara* “From the dwelling place of the earth, bring the Agni Purīṣya”).

Hoffmann (1975: 50) cites verse 3 of this hymn as one of the few clear instances of a heavenly ocean, and he is quite likely right. In verses 2–4, however, the image of an ocean of waters is overlaid with that of an ocean of light. In verse 2 Agni’s luster is “glittering, undulating radiance watching men,” a likely reference to the sun or the brightness of the sky more generally. The “undulating sea” to which Agni goes in verse 3, therefore, might not be a sea of waters, or rather, not only a sea of water, but also a sea of light. In verse 4 both the fires and the waters cascade downward. The fires could be in the waters, but they might also be light, which, like rain, pours down from heaven.

1. Here is Agni, in whom the bellowing Indra has received the pressed soma in his belly.
   As (we praise) a steed, a team-horse, (that has won) the prize of a thousand, you are praised, Jātavedas, since you are victorious.
2. O Agni, worthy to receive the sacrifice, your luster, which is in heaven and on earth, which is here among the plants and the waters,
   and by which you have stretched throughout the wide midspace—that is glittering, undulating radiance watching men.
3. O Agni, you go there to the undulating sea of heaven—there you have spoken to the gods, who are the holy ones—
   to the waters, which, in the realm of light, are beyond the sun, and which draw nearby beneath.
4. Let the fires from their overflowing source, along with the falling torrents—
   (all of them) great refreshments free of deception and free of disease—take pleasure in the sacrifice.
5. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
   There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.23 (257) Agni

Devaśravas Bhārata and Devavāta Bhārata
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except satobr̥hatī 3

The Agni of this hymn is probably the tribal fire of the Bhāratas (Proferes 2007: 37), which forms the ritual center of the Bhārata clans. This Agni governs the peoples (vs.

3)—likely the peoples of the tribe, as Proferes suggests—from a location, "earth's most desirable place" (vs. 4), among the three rivers. Various theories have been offered for the identity of Devaśravas, who is addressed in verse 3, and Devavāta, to whom the Agni of the Bhāratas belong. Surely Devavāta is or was the king of the Bhāratas, since his is the Bhārata fire. Devaśravas could be a priest or poet, or he could have been a Bhārata leader, perhaps an ally or successor of Devavāta. In any case, along with the Agni of the Bhāratas himself, they are the focus of the hymn since they are named in the central verse and this central verse is marked by a change in meter.

1. Churned out and well placed in his dwelling, the young poet, the leader of the rite,
   the unaging Agni amid the aging wood—Jātavedas has received immortality here.
2. The two Bhāratas, Devaśravas and Devavāta, have richly churned the very skillful Agni.
   Agni, look upon (every one) separately with lofty wealth. Then become the leader of our refreshments day after day.
3. Ten fingers have given birth to him, the ancient one, the dear one born well among his mothers.
   Praise the Agni of Devavāta, o Devaśravas, (the fire) who will exert his will over the peoples.
4. He has installed you, Agni, here on earth's most desirable place, in the track of the milk-libation, on the brightest day of days.
   As (the Agni) of Manu, shine richly upon the Dr̥ṣadvatī, on the Āpayā, and on the Sarasvatī.
5. – Make the milk-libation, the very wondrous winning of the cow, succeed, o Agni, for him who invokes you most constantly.
   There should be for us a son and a lineage that proliferates. Agni, let this your favor be for us.

III.24 (258) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1

This is a brief, almost staccato hymn. Every verse begins with an invocation to Agni, and most verses follow with an imperative, urging Agni to take his place on the ritual ground and to grant the wishes of the poet and his people. The first three verses refer either directly or indirectly to the brightening fire, which may find its counterpart in the swiftness and brevity of the hymn.

1. O Agni, overwhelm in battles and cast away evil intents!
   Hard to overcome but overcoming hostilities, establish luster for the one whose vehicle is the sacrifice.

2. O Agni, you are kindled by the ghee-libation—you, the immortal one, pursuing the gods as Hotar.
   Take pleasure in our rite!
3. O Agni, who are awake with brilliance! O son of strength, to whom offering is made!
   Sit here on this ritual grass of mine!
4. O Agni, exalt our songs together with all the fires, with (all) the gods,
   and those who are the respected (priests) in the sacrifices.
5. O Agni, to the pious man give wealth full of heroes, a profusion (of heroes)!
   Sharpen us to be endowed with sons!

III.25 (259) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: virāj

As in the previous hymn, each verse begins with "Agni," whom the poet addresses in the beginning and the final two verses and who is the subject of verses 2 and 3. Actually verse 4 opens with a *vā́yav índraś ca* construction, which mixes a vocative and a nominative, and so is a hybrid that may mark a transition between the nominative of verse 3 and the vocative of verse 5. The hymn is also defined by ring composition: *sūnúḥ* (1a) / *sūno* (5b) // *viśvávedāḥ* (1b) / *jātavedaḥ* (5b).

The phrase in the last verse "home of the waters" is somewhat puzzling, so much so that Geldner assumes an ellipsis of *nápāt*, which would yield a translation "O Agni, (child) of the waters, you are kindled in the home. . . ." or the like. But there is little in the hymn itself to suggest such an ellipsis, nor does Sāyaṇa read one here. Although it is not clear exactly what the "home of the waters" refers to—it might simply be the firewood—the end of the verse suggests that Agni makes all homes or abodes great, wherever he is kindled.

1. O Agni, you are the watchful son of heaven and of earth by the continuity (of fires), providing all possessions.
   Sacrifice to the gods here one by one, o attentive one.
2. Agni, the knowing one, wins heroic deeds. He wins victory's prize, exerting himself for immortality.
   Convey the gods here to us, o you of many cattle.
3. Agni, the unerring one, shines upon heaven and earth, immortal deities, common to all people,
   since, much glittering through our acts of reverence, he is master through the prizes of victory.
4. O Agni—you and Indra!—journey here to the sacrifice at the home of the pious man pressing soma,
   o you two gods who never disdain to drink the soma.

5. O Agni, you are kindled in the home of the waters, as our own, o son of
   strength, o Jātavedas,
   making the abodes great by your help.

III.26 (260) Agni Vaiśvānara

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: jagatī 1–6, triṣṭubh 7–9, arranged in tr̥cas

The deities and attribution of the hymn are more complicated than indicated above. The hymn comprises three tr̥cas: the first set of three verses is to Agni Vaiśvānara, the second to the Maruts, and the third begins with Agni's self-praise in verse 7 and then continues with the poet's description of Agni in verses 8–9. This is one way to regard the hymn. Geldner offers another, quite plausible analysis. According to him, the first tr̥ca contains verses to accompany the kindling of Agni. In the second the newly created Agni is fanned with the help of the Maruts. The third tr̥ca is entirely the speech of Agni. It begins with the god's praise of himself and then continues with the god's praise of the poet. Bergaigne argues that the Āgnimāruta śastra in the later ritual consists of three major parts addressed to Vaiśvānara, the Maruts, and Jātavedas and suggests that this hymn represents an old Āgnimāruta śastra. Oldenberg disagrees with both Geldner and Bergaigne, holding that the hymn does not possess the kind of unity that either asserts. In his translation of Agni hymns (1897), he describes the three tr̥cas as "three independent hymns" because of the placement of the hymn in the collection; that is, it has more verses than the preceding hymns, while in the normal arrangement it should have the same number of verses or fewer.

Despite its placement in the collection and the change of meter, we believe that Geldner and Bergaigne are correct in seeing a coherence to the hymn and find Bergaigne's suggestion that this is an early Āgnimāruta śastra an attractive one.

1. Having discerned with our mind Vaiśvānara, who conforms to what is
   real and finds the sun, we Kuśikas, bringing offerings
   and desiring goods, invoke with our songs the god of good gifts, the
   delighting charioteer.
2. We invoke the beautiful Agni for help, who is Vaiśvānara and
   praiseworthy Mātariśvan,
   who is Br̥haspati for the divine assembly of Manu, who is the inspired
   poet and the listener, the guest and the quick-streaming one.
3. Whinnying like a horse, he is kindled by the females [=the fingers of
   the priest]; Vaiśvānara (is kindled) by the Kuśikas, generation after
   generation.
   Let Agni, awake among the immortals, grant us treasure and an
   abundance of good men and good horses.

4. Let the prizes of victory go forth. Blended with their powers, the fires have hitched up their spotted antelopes for beauty.
   Growing aloft, providing all possessions, the undeceivable Maruts make mountains tremble.
5. The Maruts, with Agni's splendor and belonging to all communities—we beg for their powerful and mighty help—
   are the noisy sons of Rudra, cloaked in rain, having the will to destroy like lions but bringing good gifts.
6. We beg (the Maruts)—cohort upon cohort, band upon band—with our good chants for the radiance of Agni and the power of the Maruts,
   with their dappled horses, with their unreceding generosity, the travelers to the sacrifice, wise at the ritual distributions.

7. [Agni:] "I am Agni, Jātavedas by birth. My eye is ghee; the immortal one [=soma] is in my mouth.
   The chant of three parts, which is the measure of space, the inexhaustible hot milk, and the offering—I am that by name."
8. Since he [=Agni?] purified the chant with three purifying filters, discovering understanding and light with his heart,
   he made for himself the highest treasure by his own will, and then he surveyed heaven and earth.
9. Lead him across—the inexhaustible well-spring of a hundred streams, the father of words to be said, who understands inspiration,
   and the joyful crackling in the lap of his parents—him who speaks what is real, o you two world-halves.

III.27 (261) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
15 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The hymn comprises five tr̥cas, at least some of which show formal linkages that connect a tr̥ca to the one following it. This is particularly obvious in the case of the third (vss. 7–9) and fourth (vss. 10–12) tr̥cas, which are connected to the fourth and fifth (vss. 13–15) respectively. The last verse of the third tr̥ca (9a, c) describes Agni as *váreṇyaḥ... dákṣasya pitáram* "(the one) to be chosen, the father of skill," a characterization echoed by *váreṇyaṃ dákṣasya* in 10ab, the first verse of the fourth tr̥ca. Likewise, the poet "summons" (*īḷe*) Agni at the end of verse 12 and then describes him as *īḷénya* "to be summoned" in verse 13. A ring formed by *havíṣmant* "bearing offerings" in the first and penultimate verses provides a unity to the whole hymn.

Even though this hymn is closely connected to the ritual, the precise application of the verses is not clear. Bergaigne thinks that they are *sāmidhenī* (fire-kindling) verses to be recited as the fire is kindled, and surely this is true of at least the last tr̥ca, which repeats the verb *sam* √*idh* in each of its verses. Oldenberg agrees that parts of this hymn are sāmidhenī verses, but suggests that verses 7–9, for example, describe the *agnipraṇayana*, the procession of the fire to the uttaravedi in the classical Vedic rite, and that 10–12 refer to the installation of the fire. The agnipraṇayana and the deposition of the fire are closely conjoined rites.

1. Forth to you (go) the heaven-bound prizes, bearing offerings, by the ghee-filled (ladle).
   He [=Agni?] goes to the gods, seeking their favor.
2. With my song I summon Agni, recognizing inspired words, bringing success to the sacrifice,
   with his attentive listening and his emplaced (fires).
3. Agni, may we be able to guide the prizewinning (horses) of you, a god;
   may we cross beyond hatreds.

4. Being kindled in the rite, the purifying Agni to be summoned,
   he with flaming hair—him do we beg.
5. Of broad visage, immortal, ghee-cloaked, receiving well-poured oblations,
   Agni is the oblation-carrier of the sacrifice.
6. With their sacrificial spoons held out, bringing the sacrifice with their insight just so, they eagerly
   put Agni here for help.

7. As the Hotar, the immortal god goes in front with his craft,
   spurring on the ritual distributions.
8. The prizewinner is placed among the prizes. He is led forth in the rites
   as the inspired poet bringing success to the sacrifice.
9. Through insight the one to be chosen has been created. He has received as the embryo of living beings
   the father of skill through the continuity (of his fires).

10. I have installed you, the one to be chosen, (the father) of skill, o you who are made with strength by the libation;
    (I have installed) you, the bright shining fire-priest, o Agni.
11. Agni, guiding (his horses) and crossing the waters—at the harnessing of the truth, the eager
    inspired ones kindle him with the prizes of victory.
12. The child of nourishment, shining in the rite up to heaven,
    having a poet's purpose, Agni—him I summon.

13. As the one to be summoned, to be revered, visible throughout the darkness,
    the bull Agni is kindled.

14. The bull Agni is kindled, conveying the gods like a horse.
    Bearing offerings, they summon him.
15. As bulls ourselves, o bull, may we kindle you, the bull,
    shining aloft, o Agni.

III.28 (262) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
6 verses: gāyatrī 1, 2, 6; uṣṇih 3; triṣṭubh 4; jagatī 5

The hymn has three divisions that correspond to the offering of the *puroḷāś*, the "sacrificial cake" in the three soma-pressings: verses 1–2 belong to the Morning Pressing, verse 4 to the Midday Pressing, and verse 5 to the Third Pressing. The hymn is metrically mixed in an arrangement corresponding to the later tradition that assigns the gāyatrī meter to the first pressing, the triṣṭubh to the second, and the jagatī to the third. In part because the hymn is so closely tied to a specific parts of the liturgy, it likely represents a more advanced stage in the development of the Vedic ritual than is found in most R̥gvedic hymns. In the classical rite there is an offering of rice cakes—in the earlier period they were barley cakes—to Indra at each of the three soma-pressings. After each cake offering, there is an additional offering to Agni Sviṣṭakr̥t, and, as Oldenberg (1897: 301) points out, Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra V.4.6 prescribes III.28.1, 4, and 5 for these offerings, according to the order of the soma-pressings. See also III.52, which also concerns the sacrificial cakes offered to Indra offered in the three pressings.

The remaining two verses (3 and 6) cannot be so readily connected with the three daily pressings. Verse 3 is not in any of the meters associated with the pressings, but rather in the rare uṣṇih meter. Verse 6 is in gāyatrī, but it is at the end of the hymn, not at the beginning where we would have expected the "morning" verses to appear. These are also the only two verses in which the description *tiróahnya* appears. The term means "aged overnight," or more literally, "having passed through the day." This word describes soma that is offered to the Aśvins in the early morning of the day following the soma-pressing day. In the classical Atirātra or "overnight" soma ritual, an offering of a puroḷāś accompanies this soma offering to the Aśvins, and these offerings of soma and puroḷāś may also be followed by a *sviṣṭakr̥t* offering of puroḷāś to Agni. These two verses thus likely refer to one or another of these final offerings of an Atirātra rite. Indeed, according to ĀśvŚS V.6.25, verse 6 is the *yājyā* or "offering" verse of the sviṣṭakr̥t rite for exactly this final offering.

If the term *tiróahnya* helps locate the ritual context of verses 3 and 6, it also poses an interpretive problem. Geldner and Renou both understand *tiróahnya* as an adjective describing the puroḷāś-cake. However, it is unlikely to be literally true that the cake is "aged overnight." Rather, as is the case in the classical rite, it would have been prepared on the morning it was offered. Recognizing this problem,

Elizarenkova understood *tiróahnya* to mean the soma "aged overnight," in accord with the consistent usage of the term elsewhere. But soma is not mentioned in the hymn, and neither verse gives any indication that *tiróahnya* describes something other than the puroḷāś. Therefore, we think that *tiróahnya* describes the puroḷāś but is not intended to describe it literally. Rather, it associates the puroḷāś with the accompanying offering of the soma "aged overnight."

In the classical Atirātra, the Āśvinaśastra, the recitation that accompanies the final soma offering to the Aśvins, follows the form of Prātaranuvāka, the early-morning litany, which opens the soma-pressing day (cf. Staal 1983 I: 683). The two recitations thus create a ritual ring, in which the end recapitulates the beginning. In this hymn verse 3, although connected with the end of the rite, is located immediately after the verses that mark the rite's beginning, and thus it becomes an icon of the conjunction of the beginning and end of the rite. This is reflected in its meter as well. Like gāyatrī, the meter associated with the morning rite, the uṣṇih meter of verse 3 consists of three pādas, but its final pāda has twelve syllables like jagatī, the meter associated with the end of the rite. The metrical form thus combines the morning and evening liturgies. Verse 6 is in gāyatrī, which again brings the hymn metrically back to the beginning of the rite, although the verse is placed at the end. For a more detailed discussion of this hymn, see Brereton (forthcoming b).

Another incongruous description appears in verse 5, which characterizes the rite (*adhvará*) as "bearing treasure" (*rátnavant*) and "wakeful" (*jā́gr̥vi*). Especially the latter is an adjective that often describes Agni (e.g., I.31.9, III.2.12) and Soma (e.g., IX.36.2, 44.3, 71.1). Here it is an epithet transferred from the sacrificial fire or from the priests who have drunk the soma to the rite, which both Agni and the priests wakefully maintain through the night. See also III.39.1, 2, in which the "thought" of the poet is "wakeful."

1. O Agni, enjoy our offering, our sacrificial cake, o Jātavedas,
   at the Early Morning Pressing, o you who are rich through insight.
2. The sacrificial cake has been cooked, o Agni, or rather, perfected for you.
   Enjoy it, o youngest one.
3. O Agni, seek after the offered sacrificial cake "aged overnight."
   You are the son of strength, installed in the rite.
4. At the Midday Pressing, o poet Jātavedas, enjoy the sacrificial cake here.
   O Agni, the wise do not diminish the portion that belongs to you, the
   youthful one, at the ritual distributions.
5. O Agni, since at the Third Pressing you will take pleasure in the
   sacrificial cake offered you, o son of strength,
   then (establish) the rite among the gods, amid their admiration; establish
   it, bearing treasure and wakeful, among the immortals.
6. O Agni Jātavedas, becoming strong, enjoy the offering, the
   sacrificial cake,
   "aged overnight."

III.29 (263) Agni

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
16 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 10, 12; jagatī 6, 11, 14–15

This hymn was composed to accompany the creation of a new fire for the sacrifice. This fire was created through friction using a fire drill that consisted of two pieces of wood. The upper fire-churning stick was held vertically, with one end in a recessed area in the lower piece of wood, which was horizontal. Wood chips were placed around the recessed area on the lower plank. The upper stick was then rotated back and forth, like a churn. In the later ritual this is done by wrapping a rope around the upper stick and pulling on one side and then the other to make the stick rotate back and forth. Eventually, enough heat was generated so that the wood chips caught fire.

This process of churning out the fire was regularly identified in the R̥gvedic hymns with sexual intercourse, and this repeated image presents the upper fire-churning stick as the father, with phallic overtones especially in verse 1, and the lower fire-churning stick as the mother of fire. Another theme that runs throughout the hymn, and again a common one in Agni hymns, is the idea that Agni is born as a priest of the sacrifice, who carries the oblations (vss. 4, 7) and offers the sacrifice (vs. 8) and who is a sage poet (vss. 5, 12) and a Hotar (vss. 8, 16) in the company of the seven Hotars (vs. 14), the seven priests of the rite. The priests kindling Agni are named in verse 15: they are the Kuśikas, whose knowledge and ability to formulate the truth about Agni the hymn accentuates.

1. Here is the base for fire-churning; here is the readied begetting tool [=upper fire-churning stick].
   Bring here the clanlord's lady [=lower fire-churning stick]. Let us churn Agni in the ancient way.
2. As Jātavedas, who is placed within the two fire-churning sticks, like an unborn child well placed within women with child,
   Agni is to be summoned day after day by those awake, by the sons of Manu bearing offerings.
3. Attentive, bear down upon her who is opened up [=the lower fire-churning stick]. Impregnated on this day, she has given birth to the bull.
   With flame-red crests—his countenance is glowing—the son of the libation has been born within the ritual pattern.
4. In the footprint of the libation and upon the navel of the earth, we
   would install you to convey our oblation, o Agni Jātavedas.
5. O men, churn out the unduplicitous poet, the discerning and immortal one of beautiful face.
   Beget the beacon of the sacrifice, the foremost one in front—Agni, the very benevolent, o men.

6. When they churn him with their arms, he shines out, like a prizewinning horse, flame-red here in the wood.
   Unstoppable, like the shimmering (chariot) of the Aśvins on its course [=the sun?], he avoids the stones, burning the grasses.
7. As soon as he is born, Agni shines, becoming ever more visible—he, the prizewinning horse, the inspired one praised by poets, the one bringing good gifts,
   whom the gods have established at the rites—the one to be summoned, knowing all things, conveying oblations.
8. Sit attentive, Hotar, in your own broad place; make the sacrifice sit in the womb of the well-performed (sacrifice).
   Pursuing the gods, you will sacrifice to the gods with the offering. Agni, place lofty vigor in the sacrificer.
9. Companions, create the smoky bull and without faltering go toward victory's prize.
   Here is Agni, overwhelming in battles and rich in good heroes, by whom the gods overwhelmed the Dasyus.
10. Here is your womb at its season, from which you shone at birth.
    Recognizing it, Agni, take your seat here, and then make our songs strong.
11. He is called Tanūnapāt as the embryo belonging to the lord [=the upper churning stick?]. He becomes Narāśaṃsa when he is born,
    and Mātariśvan when he has assumed his measure in his mother. He became the rush of the wind in leaping forth.
12. The poet is churned out by skillful churning and installed with skillful installation.
    O Agni, perform good rites. Sacrifice to the gods for him seeking the gods.
13. Mortals have begotten the immortal one, who is no miscarriage, overwhelming, hard-jawed.
    Joined together, ten unwed sisters [=fingers] embrace the male just born.
14. From of old, bringing the seven Hotars, he has shone forth in the lap of his mother when he blazed upon her udder.
    Day after day, greatly delighting, he does not blink after he has been born from the belly of the lord.
15. Fighting their enemies like the advance troops of Maruts, those first-born of the formulation [=the Kuśikas] know everything.
    The Kuśikas raised a formulation filled with brilliance. One by one, each in his house, they kindled Agni.
16. Since we chose you here today while the sacrifice was proceeding, o attentive Hotar—
    you have steadfastly journeyed and you have steadfastly labored—as the knowing one recognizing this, journey here to the soma.

III.30 (264) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
22 verses: triṣṭubh

This long hymn follows a familiar path. It begins with three verses expressing the sacrificers' hopes that Indra will appear at their sacrifice and their worries about his continuing absence. There follow a number of verses (4–14) describing the powers and deeds of Indra, past and present, including the defeats of Vr̥tra (8) and Vala (10). This section ends with two verses (12–13) on the sun and dawn, showing that Indra orders the cosmos both spatially and temporally. The riddling verse 14, with the well-known paradox of the "cooked" milk contained within a "raw" cow, ends this section of the hymn by seeming to identify the dawn as cow with other images of plenty for which Indra is responsible; it picks up the cow imagery already found in verse 10 concerning the release of the cows from the Vala cave. Moreover, since sacrificial gifts are distributed at the dawn ritual, the mention of dawn sets the stage for the requests for gifts at the end of the hymn.

The next part of the hymn (15–17) begins abruptly with an address to Indra and a command to him: he is exhorted to come to the aid of the poet and his allies against enemies in violent battle. The final section (18–21) continues the direct requests to Indra, but here for material goods to be distributed peaceably at the sacrifice. The final verse (before the refrain) applies the model of the Vala victory to the present, beseeching Indra to continue to break open cowpens and distribute cows.

As often, the concerns of the whole hymn are subtly foreshadowed in the first verse, which both establishes the sacrificers as beset by hostile forces and their sacrifice as a site for beneficial exchange with the god.

The hymn is characterized by a number of hapaxes and by affective morphology, especially in the sections devoted to Indra's opponents; the translations of some of these words are provisional.

1. They desire you, your comrades in soma; they press the soma; they set out pleasurable offerings.
   They endure the taunting of the people, for, Indra, there is no sign from you.
2. Even the farthest dusky realms are not at a distance for you. But drive here with your two fallow bays, bay-horsed one.
   It is for (you), the sturdy bull, that these pressings here were made and the pressing stones yoked when the fire was being kindled.
3. Indra of good lips, bounteous, overwhelming, having a great troop, powerfully ranging, mettlesome—
   that which you, powerful one, established among mortals, even when hard-pressed, where are these manly powers of yours now, bull?
4. For you, stirring the unstirrable, alone range about smashing obstacle after obstacle.

It is following your commandment that heaven and earth and the mountains stand like (pillars) implanted.

5. And, o you who are much invoked with acclamations, in fearlessness you alone talked tough, since you are the obstacle-smasher.
   Even these two world-halves without limits—when you grabbed them together, bounteous Indra, it was just a handful for you.
6. (Come) forth along an easy slope with your two fallow bays; let your mace come forth, pulverizing the rivals.
   Smash those facing you, those following, those turned away. Make all this come true; let it be accomplished.
7. To whatever mortal you have provided sustenance, he takes a portion of the household goods, even what is not yet apportioned.
   Auspicious is your benevolence and covered with ghee, much-invoked Indra; your generosity provides a thousand gifts.
8. The one dwelling together with (his mother) Dānu, the handless vermin did you utterly crush, much-invoked Indra.
   With your powerful (mace), Indra, you smashed at the sneering footless Vṛtra, who was growing strong.
9. You set down in its seat the whole, great, limitless, vital earth, Indra.
   The bull propped up heaven and the midspace. Let the waters flow here, propelled by you.
10. Vala, the enclosure of cattle, unquiet and fearful, opened up (even) before being struck, o Indra.
    He [=Indra] made the paths easy to travel, to drive out the cows. The choir (of Aṅgirases) aided the much-invoked one, blowing (on their instruments).
11. The one—Indra—filled the two—earth and heaven—the joint repositories of goods.
    And from the midspace, at their join [i.e., of heaven and earth], as charioteer of refreshment (bring) us prizes in yoke together, o champion.
12. The Sun does not confound the directions as they are directed, as they are day after day propelled forth by him of the fallow bays.
    When he has fully reached (the end) of the road, only after that does he perform his unyoking of the horses. But that is his (way).
13. They desire to see, at the coming of Dawn from night, the great glittering face of her who shines forth [=Dawn].
    They all know when she has come with her greatness. Many are the well-done deeds of Indra.
14. Great light was deposited in her udder. Herself raw, the cow roams about carrying the cooked (milk).
    Every sweetness was brought together in the ruddy one, when Indra established her for nourishment.

15. Indra, stand fast! The (enemies') "journey-buckets" [=chariots] have come. Do your best for the sacrifice, for the singer, for your comrades.
    The mortals who use dirty tricks, those of evil ways, the cheaters wearing quivers are to be smashed.
16. All around your battle-cry is heard by the closest foes. Smash your most scorching missile down on them.
    Cleave them below; break them apart; overwhelm them. Smash the demonic force, bounteous one; make them subject to you.
17. Tear out the demonic power, root and all, Indra; cleave its middle; shatter its top.
    How far have you sent it scooting? Hurl your scorching lance at the hater of the sacred formulation.
18. It is for our well-being and with your prize-seeking (horses), o leader, that you will sit down to many great refreshments.
    Might we be winners of lofty wealth. Let your portion, conferring offspring, be in us, Indra.
19. Bring hither to us a brilliant portion, Indra. Might we deposit it amid the surplus of your giving.
    As if in the (sea-)basin, desire spreads out in us. Fulfill it, goods-lord of goods.
20. Invigorate this desire with cows, with horses, with recompense in gold, and you will (further) spread it out.
    Seeking the sun, the inspired poets, the Kuśikas, have made with their thoughts a (ritual) conveyance for you, for Indra.
21. Keep breaking open the cowpens for us, (break out) the cows, lord of cows; let winnings and victory-prizes together come to us.
    You are the ruler of heaven, you bull, whose blusterings are real. For us, bounteous one, become a giver of cows.
22. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.31 (265) Indra

Kuśika Aiṣīrathi or Viśvāmitra Gāthina
22 verses: triṣṭubh

This dense and often puzzling hymn has given rise to much discussion. The heart of the hymn (vss. 4–11 and passim throughout the rest of the hymn) provides one

of the fullest accounts in the Ṛgveda of the Vala myth and especially of Indra and the Aṅgirases as they besiege the Vala cave and seek to free the cows within by means of song and ritual activity. Since the cows of the Vala myth are often used as symbols of the dawns, the hymn also celebrates the coming of dawn and its ritual manifestations, including the distribution of priestly gifts (dakṣiṇā), which occurs at the early-morning ritual.

Perhaps the most striking part of the hymn, however, is found in the first three verses, which are often taken as depicting the production of the ritual fire as an allegory of cosmic incest. Although there are certainly hints of an incestuous liaison, the relationships among the various kinship terms here are not at all clear, and in our opinion the ritual references to the production of fire so dominate the picture and distort the underlying sexual configurations that it is a mistake to seek too literal a mythological reading. The translation of the first two verses, especially, is provisional. Our identifications of the personae with various ritual elements differ from those of other scholars (who also differ among themselves), but in our opinion the ritual reference here is not to the initial production of ritual fire, but rather the transformation, through removal to the east, of the undifferentiated ritual fire into the new offering fire, an action well known from the later ritual literature, where the new fire with its eastern hearth is called the Āhavanīya and the older one in the west the Gārhapatya. If this particular ritual procedure was an innovation in the Ṛgveda or pre-Ṛgveda, as we suspect, a mystical and riddling presentation of it like this would not be surprising.

The connection between this opening description of the birth of Agni and the following treatment of the Vala myth may not be superficially obvious, but it is the theme of dawn that unites them: fire is kindled at dawn, and the release of the Vala cows is regularly likened to the breaking of dawn.

It is notable that neither Indra nor the Aṅgirases are named for most of the recital of the Vala myth, though they are referred to constantly. Indeed the plural Aṅgirases is not found in the mythic section, only the singular (vs. 7) referring to Indra. Indra *is* named, but not until verse 11, the exact center of the hymn (minus the refrain, vs. 22) and the standard locus for mysteries and their solutions. However, various epithets, associates, and exploits of Indra that uniquely identify him and that are irrelevant to the Vala myth have foreshadowed this naming: Saramā, Indra's dog, in verse 6; his opponent Śuṣṇa in verse 8; and the Vṛtra-smashing earlier in verse 11. After the first naming of Indra in verse 11 the hymn broadens its view to include a range of Indra's cosmogonic deeds, especially the separation of Heaven and Earth and the smashing of Vṛtra.

The hymn returns to the ritual here-and-now starting around verse 17, and the theme of dawn, appropriate both to the fire-kindling verses 1–3 and the extensive treatment of the Vala myth, prompts the requests for Indra' liberality to be manifested in the early-morning dakṣiṇā, with the dispensing of gifts compared to the outpouring of cows from the opened Vala cave.

1. Instructing the (grand)daughter [=Āhavanīya?] of his daughter [=Gārhapatya?], the (offering-)conveyor [=Agni] has come—he the knowing one, ritually serving the visionary power of truth—
   to where the father [=priest? Agni?], stretching out straight, has run toward the outpouring of his daughter [=butter offering?] with capable mind.
2. The son of her body [=Agni?] has not left behind his leavings for her sister [=Gārhapatya?]. He has made the womb [=Āhavanīya?] a repository for the winner.
   When the mothers [=fingers] begot the (offering-)conveyor, one of the two good workers [=fire-churning sticks] was the actor, the other was the one assuring success.
3. Agni was begotten, quivering with his tongue [/by the offering-spoon, trembling], to display the sons [=flames?] of the great ruddy one.
   Great was the womb, great the birth of these here, great the growth of the one with fallow bays [=Indra] through the sacrifices.
4. The victorious (clans [=Aṅgirases?]) escorted the contender [=Indra?]. They distinguished the great light from the darkness.
   Recognizing him, the dawns rose up in response. He became the lone lord [/husband] of the cows—Indra.
5. The insightful ones bored through to the (cows), though they were in a stronghold. The seven inspired poets impelled (the cows?) with advancing mind.
   They found the whole path of truth. Himself knowing the way, he [=Indra] entered among them [=cows] with homage.
6. When Saramā found the break in the rock, she made the great ancient herd directed toward one goal.
   Sure-footed, she led the vanguard of the cows [/syllables]. First recognizing (them), she went to their bellowing.
7. The foremost inspired poet [=Indra] came, acting in partnership (with the Aṅgirases). The rock brought the embryo to sweetness for the good worker.
   The young blood won, doing battle alongside the youths. Then he became (an) Aṅgiras immediately upon singing.
8. The counterweight of every being, standing at the forefront, he knows all the races; he smashes Śuṣṇa.
   Following the track of heaven, seeking cows, chanting, the comrade released us, his comrades, from calumny.
9. With cow-seeking mind, they sat down (to a ritual "Session") with their chants, making for themselves a way toward immortality.
   Just this was their long Session, by which, for months, they sought to win (the cows) through truth.

10. Surveying (the cows) en masse, they delighted in their own possession, milking out the milk of the age-old semen.
    Their cry heated the two worlds through. Amid (all) that was born they set the outstanding one [=Indra?]; amid the cows they set heroes.
11. He was Vṛtra-smasher with (the help of) those who were born (together) [=Maruts], and he sent the ruddy (cows) surging upward with oblations and with the chants (of the Aṅgirases)—he is Indra.
    She of broad extent, bearing ghee-rich (milk) to him, milked out honey, sweetness—the thoroughbred cow.
12. It was for the father that they performed a ritual Session, for him also they prepared a seat, because the good workers surveyed the great, turbulent (cowpen).
    Propping apart with a prop the two begetters [=Heaven and Earth], while sitting (the Session) they fixed upright the dazzling (seat).
13. When the great (Earth), the Holy Place, has set him to piercing—him who is grown strong in a single day, spread wide in the two world-halves,
    and in whom the flawless hymns are united—(then) all powers are conceded to Indra.
14. Great is your comradeship—I long for it here, and for your powers. Numerous teams [=our poetic thoughts] come here to the Vṛtra-smasher.
    Great is the praise song. We have arrived at the favor of the patron [=Indra]. For us, liberal one, become a protector of cows.
15. Great the dwelling place, abundant the gleaming (goods) that he found; thereupon he assembled movable (goods [=livestock]) for his comrades.
    Indra along with the men, as shining one, begot at one blow the sun, the dawn, the way, the fire.
16. Also the all-gleaming waters, spread wide, did this master of the house send surging forth toward a single goal.
    Through the days, through the nights, (the priests) impel the runners, (the streams) of honey [=soma] being purified with poets as their purifying filters.
17. The two black treasure-chambers [=Dawn and Night], deserving the sacrifice, follow (each other) in succession through the magnanimity of the Sun,
    when your amiable, straight-flying comrades (gather) round about, to twist your greatness (toward them), Indra.
18. Become lord of liberalities, you smasher of Vṛtra, a bull of songs, conferring vigor all the life long.
    Come here to us with your friendly fellowship, a great one hastening with great help.

19. Serving him with homage like the Aṅgirases, I make new (their hymn) born of old, for the older one.
    Run over the deceits, manifold and godless, and set us up to win the sun, bounteous one.
20. The far-extended mists have just become clear; carry us across to the edge of them, to well-being.
    O Indra, as charioteer protect us from harm. Quickly, quickly make us winners of cows.
21. The Vr̥tra-smasher, lord of cows, has put his cows on display. He has come between the black (nights) (and bright days) with the ruddy manifestations (of the cows [=dawns]).
    And allotting the liberalities [=gifts] in accord with truth, he opened up all the doors that are his own.
22. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.32 (266) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
17 verses: triṣṭubh

The ritual application of this hymn is announced in the first verse: the Midday Pressing of soma, which in some ritual circles, as here, Indra shares with the Marut troop, his supporters in the Vr̥tra battle. Throughout the hymn invitations to drink soma at this rite are interspersed with praises of Indra's cosmogonic deeds, especially the slaying of Vr̥tra. In verses 9–10 Indra's powers are ascribed to his original drinking of soma immediately after birth, with the implicit suggestion that the sacrificers' current offering of soma will revitalize those powers for the sacrificers' benefit.

For the most part the language of this hymn is straightforward and even a bit monotonous, and there are a number of technical terms pertaining to the soma sacrifice (see, e.g., the types of soma in vs. 2). There are, however, several studied contrastive pairs (e.g., "vulnerable... invulnerable," vs. 4; "goddesses... godless," vs. 6; see also vss. 7, 11), as well as a few striking images, such as Indra "wearing the earth on his other hip" (vs. 11) as an indication of his greatness.

1. O Indra, lord of soma, drink this soma here, the Midday Pressing, which is dear to you.
   Snuffling out your two lips, you bounteous possessor of the silvery drink, having unhitched your two fallow bays, reach exhilaration here.

2. Mixed with cows [=milk], stirred (with meal), or pure, o Indra—drink the soma. We have given it to you for your exhilaration.
   Joined in pleasure with the formulation-making flock of Maruts, with the Rudras, drench yourself (in it), to satiety.
3. They who increased your tempestuousness, who increased your power, the Maruts, hymning your strength, Indra—
   at the Midday Pressing, you with mace in hand, drink in a flock with the Rudras, you of good lips.
4. It was they who became inspired at his honeyed (drink), Indra's troop, who were the Maruts,
   impelled by whom he found the vulnerable place of Vr̥tra, who thought himself invulnerable.
5. As by Manu, o Indra, enjoying the pressing, drink the soma for manly power ever new.
   Let yourself be turned hither by our sacrifices, you of the fallow bays. Along with the hastening ones, you set to running the flooding waters,
6. When you sent forth the waters, like steeds to run in a contest—having smashed Vr̥tra,
   who was lying still, with your moving weapon of death, o Indra, him having surrounded the goddesses, godless himself.
7. Let us sacrifice to Indra, increased through homage, lofty and towering, unaging and youthful,
   whose greatness the two dear world-halves measured, but did not measure up to the greatness of him worthy of the sacrifice.
8. Many are the well-done deeds of Indra. The All Gods do not violate the commandments (of him),
   who upholds earth and this heaven. Of wondrous power, he begot the sun and the dawn.
9. Undeceptive one, this greatness of yours is truly real: because, just born, you drank the soma,
   not the heavens, Indra, nor the days, nor the months and years could obstruct the strength of you, the powerful one.
10. You, Indra, just born, drank the soma for exhilaration in the highest distant heaven.
    After you had entered heaven and earth, then you became the first to suckle the bard.
11. You smashed the serpent lying around the flood, displaying its strength—you powerfully born, as more powerful (than he).
    Heaven did not come close to your greatness then, when you wore the earth on the other hip.
12. Since the sacrifice has become your strengthener, Indra, and the dear ritual meal of pressed soma also,

aid sacrifice upon sacrifice, being the one who deserves the sacrifice; the sacrifice aided your mace in the serpent-smashing.

13. With the sacrifice as aid I (previously) brought Indra nearby with his aid. May I turn him hither for newer favor,
    him who was strengthened by previous praises, who by midmost ones and by the present ones.
14. She labored when she begot me [=poet]—the Holy Place [=Earth? ritual ground?]. I shall praise Indra before the decisive day,
    so that at that time he (will) carry us across (to the far shore) of constraint, as if with a boat. Both (sides) call upon him as he travels.
15. His (soma) tub is filled—hail! As a man pours out a bucket, I have poured (for him) to drink.
    And the dear soma drinks have together turned him here with respectful circumambulation, to exhilarate Indra.
16. Not the deep river nor the surrounding peaks could obstruct you, much-invoked one,
    when impelled just so from your comrades, Indra, you broke into the cattle enclosure though it was firmly fastened.
17. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.33 (267) Viśvāmitra and the Rivers

Viśvāmitra Gāthina / Rivers
13 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 13

Although this hymn is found in the Indra collection, the Anukramaṇī identifies Indra as the dedicand only of verses 6–7, with the remainder divided between the rivers (Nadyas: 1–3, 5, 9, 11–13) and the poet himself, Viśvāmitra (4, 8, 10). After two opening verses describing the confluence of the Vipāś and Śutudrī rivers, this justly famous poem consists of a dialogue between those rivers and Viśvāmitra, who begs the rivers to stop in their course to allow the Bharata forces, under his patron, King Sudās (not named here, but see III.53.9), to cross. They accede to his request in return for his ensuring their future fame in his poetry, and the Bharatas cross successfully, as is announced in verse 12—after which the rivers are urged to refill themselves with water and flow again. That it is the poet who succeeds in temporarily stopping the rivers is yet another example of the power of properly formulated speech to control the physical world. The final verse (13), in a different meter, may be a magic spell, exemplifying the continuing belief in the power of the word by applying this legendary river crossing to a team in trouble at a ford.

1. Forth from the lap of the mountains, eager, racing with each other like two mares unloosed,
   resplendent, licking each other like mother cows (their calves), the Vipāś and Śutudrī (rivers) speed with their milk.
2. Impelled by Indra as you long to take part in the forward thrust, you drive like two charioteers to the sea,
   clashing together, swelling with your waves, the one of you merges into the other—you resplendent ones.
3. [Viśvāmitra:] I have driven to the most motherly river [=Śutudrī]; we have come to the broad, well-portioned Vipāś—
   the two who are like mothers together licking their calf, proceeding together along the same womb [=riverbed].
4. [Rivers:] So we are—swelling with milk, proceeding along our god-made womb.
   Our forward thrust, launched in a surge, is not to be obstructed. Seeking what does the poet keep calling upon the rivers?
5. [Viśvāmitra:] Stop for my somian speech, truthful ones, for an instant, in your travels.
   My lofty inspired thought (has gone) forth to the river: seeking help, have I, the son of Kuśika, called upon (you).
6. [Rivers:] Indra with the mace in his arms dug us channels: he smashed away Vr̥tra [/the obstacle] surrounding the rivers.
   God Savitar of the lovely hands led (us): at his forward thrust we journey widely.
7. [Viśvāmitra:] This act of heroism is to be proclaimed ever anew, the deed of Indra when he hewed apart the serpent.
   He smashed apart the enclosures with his mace. The waters went seeking a way to go.
8. [Rivers:] This speech, singer—do not forget it—so that later generations will hear it from you.
   Favor us in return in your hymns, bard: don't put us down among men. Homage to you.
9. [Viśvāmitra:] Listen well to the bard, sisters. He has driven to you from afar with his wagon and chariot.
   Bow down; become easy to cross, staying below his axle(s) with your currents, you rivers.
10. [Rivers:] We will listen to your words, bard. You have driven from afar with wagon and chariot.
    I [=one river] will bow down to you like a young woman swollen (with milk, to her infant), (while) *I* [=other river] will bend to you like a maiden to her cavalier.
11. [Viśvāmitra:] When the Bharatas should really have crossed you entirely—the horde seeking cattle, propelled, sped by Indra—

then certainly your forward thrust, launched in a surge, will rush (again). I wish for the favor of you who deserve the sacrifice.

12. [Viśvāmitra:] The cattle-seeking Bharatas have entirely crossed; the poet has shared in the favor of the rivers.
  Swell forth, nurturing, very generous; fill your bellies; drive quickly.
13. Let your wave push up the yoke-pins; o waters, let loose the yoking cords.
  Let the two inviolable (oxen), doing no ill, without offense, not come to naught.

III.34 (268) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The emphasis in this hymn, as often in Indra hymns, is on Indra's victories and the gains he won not only for himself but also for gods and mortals. In several verses (esp. 3 and 6) Indra's sheer power, reinforced by his backup troops, is contrasted with his control of clever tricks and artifice; both types of approach contribute to his success.

The underlying theme of victory, expressed in a variety of ways earlier in the hymn, becomes insistent in the numerous repetitions of the verb "win" (√*san*) in the last three verses before the refrain (vss. 8–10), which contain eight forms of the verb (including four forms of the perfect *sasā́na* in a single verse [9]); the root appears previously in the hymn only in the root noun compound *svar-sán* "winning the sun" in verse 4.

The poets' role in spurring Indra to victory is mentioned several times at the beginning of the hymn (vss. 1–2), but is otherwise backgrounded; the poets' task in the hymn is more to celebrate and praise (vss. 6, 7, 8) the god than to inspire him. In fact, it is Indra who grants inspiration to the poets (vs. 5), an action that precedes and makes possible their praises in verses 6–8.

One curious feature of the hymn is the presence of phraseology and imagery characteristic of the god Agni in 3cd and of fire-priests in 4ab. The point of contact is probably to be found in verse 4, where Indra is said to win the sun and make it shine, and to find the light, since the kindling of the ritual fire at dawn is associated with and often presented as the cause of the sunrise.

1. Indra, stronghold-splitter, overcame the Dāsa with his chants, finding goods, fragmenting his rivals.
  Spurred on by the sacred formulation, grown strong in his body, he of abundant gifts filled both world-halves.

2. I rouse forth speech as a spur for you, the forceful combatant, exerting myself for the immortal one.
   Indra, you travel at the forefront of the peoples stemming from Manu and of the divine clans.
3. Indra obstructed the obstacle [/Vṛtra] through control of his troop [=Maruts]; he beguiled (the wiles) of the wily ones through control of forms.
   He smashed the one whose shoulders were spread [=cobra]. Burning at will in the woods, he brought to light the nourishing streams of the nights.
4. Indra, winning the sun, begetting the days, conquered in the battles along with the fire-priests, as superiority (itself).
   He made shine for Manu the beacon of the days [=sun]; he found the light for lofty joy.
5. Indra "got into" mighty thrusts, manfully assuming his many manly (powers).
   He made these insights perceptible to the singer; he extended this bright hue of theirs [=insights].
6. They admire the great things of him, the great one: many are the well-done deeds of Indra.
   He utterly crushed the bent ones with his band; with his tricks (he crushed) the Dasyus, (though) he had overwhelming strength.
7. Through combat Indra with his greatness created a wide realm for the gods, he the master of settlements, filling the bordered domains.
   At the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground] these (deeds) of his do the inspired poets, the sage poets sing with their hymns.
8. Him, victorious in every way, worthy to be chosen, granting victorious might, having won the sun and the divine waters,
   him, who won the earth and this heaven—Indra do they celebrate, those who take joy in his insight.
9. He won the steeds and the sun he won; Indra won the cow of many benefits,
   and the benefit of gold he won. Having smashed the Dasyus, he aided the Ārya hue.
10. Indra won the plants, the days; the trees he won, the midspace.
    He split Vala; he expelled the challengers. Then he became the subduer of those who set their wills against him.
11. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.35 (269) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A simple hymn, entirely devoted to Indra's journey to the sacrifice and his enjoyment of it, mostly expressed in the imperative. The progress of the hymn is completely chronological, from the yoking of his pair of horses, through the journey, during which Indra is exhorted to pass by other sacrificers (vs. 5), and finally the arrival at the ritual ground, properly prepared, and the drinking of the soma. The mention of the Maruts in verses 7 and 9 suggests that the Midday Pressing, devoted to Indra and the Maruts jointly at least in Viśvāmitra circles, is the sacrifice in question (see also, for example, III.32). There is also a rather charming concern for the welfare of Indra's horses (vss. 3, 7).

In the context of R̥gvedic poetry what is striking are the absent elements. There is neither praise of the god honored nor any mention of his attributes or heroic deeds. (The sole exception is 9b, with its unelaborated allusion to the Maruts' role in strengthening Indra and the alliance resulting therefrom.) Nor do we hear about the purpose of Indra's soma-drinking—rousing him to perform heroic deeds either in the past or for our benefit now. Nor, despite the many imperatives, does the poet ask for any gifts or for aid of any sort. It is an extraordinarily focused hymn, and its apparent simplicity may result not from artlessness, but from careful pruning.

1. Mount the pair of fallow bays being yoked to the chariot. Drive, like the wind, to our teams [=poetic thoughts].
   You will drink the stalk when you have surged to us. Indra, hail! We have given (it) to you for your exhilaration.
2. The nimble span, the pair of fallow bays I yoke to the yoke-poles of the chariot for the much invoked one.
   The two will bring Indra right here to this sacrifice assembled from every side, as if at a run.
3. Lead near the two bullish (stallions), protecting them from the scorching heat, and help them—you autonomous bull.
   Let the two horses graze. Unhitch the two sorrels here. Every day eat roasted grains of the same appearance.
4. With a sacred formulation I yoke for you the formulation-yoked pair of fallow bays, your swift comrades in joint revelry.
   O Indra, mounting the sturdy, well-naved chariot, thinking ahead, knowing, drive up to the soma.
5. Let other sacrificers not stop your bullish, straight-backed fallow bays.
   Drive beyond them, each and every one. We will prepare properly for you with pressed soma drinks.

6. Yours is this soma here. Come here, nearby. Well-disposed, drink of it each time anew.
   At just this sacrifice, having sat down on the ritual grass, put just this drop into your belly, Indra.
7. The ritual grass has been strewn for you, the soma pressed, o Indra. The roasted grains have been prepared for your fallow bays to eat.
   To the bull of many talents who is accustomed to it, to you accompanied by the Maruts are the oblations given.
8. This (soma) have the men, the mountains, and the waters jointly with the cows made honeyed for you.
   Having come here along your own paths, well-disposed, drink of it, lofty one, thinking ahead, knowing.
9. The Maruts to whom you gave a share in soma, who strengthened you and became your flock—
   joined in pleasure with them, eagerly desirous, drink the soma with the tongue of Agni, Indra.
10. Indra, drink of the pressed (soma) just by your own power or take a drink with the tongue of Agni, o you who deserve the sacrifice.
    Either from the hand of the Adhvaryu or from the oblation of the Hotar enjoy the offered sacrifice, able one.
11. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.36 (270) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–9, 11) and Ghora Āṅgirasa (10)
11 verses: triṣṭubh

In contrast to the pared-down aesthetic of the immediately preceding hymn, this one, entirely devoted to Indra's drinking of soma, presents a series of extreme images and striking turns of phrase. The emphasis is on Indra's sheer size and capaciousness when he drinks soma, and liquid images predominate: he is conceived of both as a vast container for liquid (vs. 4) and as the liquid itself (vss. 6, 8). These images of Indra's vastness are deftly used as measures of his capacity to give to his human worshipers (e.g., vss. 5, 9, 10).

1. Set this offering here to be won, being ever newly united with help.
   At every pressing he is strengthened by strengthenings, he who has become well famed through great deeds.

2. From olden days the soma drinks are known to Indra, because of which he, the craftsman, has bullish joints and extensive power.
   Grasp at (the drinks) being offered; Indra, drink of the bull, rinsed by bulls.
3. Drink, become strong. Yours are the pressed soma drinks, Indra—the first ones and these here.
   Just as you drank the previous soma drinks, Indra, so take a drink today, as the one to be admired anew.
4. A great ample tankard at the (ritual) enclosure, he is master of powerful capacity, daring power.
   The earth never encompasses him, when the soma drinks have exhilarated the one with the fallow bays.
5. Great, powerful, he is strengthened for the heroic deed. The bull has been perfected through poetic insight.
   Indra is the apportioner. His cows are givers of prizes. His gift-cows propagate in abundance.
6. When the rivers set forth like a shot, their waters went to the sea like (two) charioteers.
   But Indra is wider even than that seat [=sea], when soma, the milked plant, fills him.
7. The rivers, uniting with the sea, are carrying well-pressed soma to Indra,
   (while) those who possess hands [=human priests] milk the plant with (the tools) they use for carrying [=those same hands]; they purify it in a stream of honey with purifying filters.
8. His cheeks are like lakes holding soma; he entirely encompasses many pressings.
   When Indra devoured the first foods, having smashed Vr̥tra he chose the soma.
9. Bring it here. Let no one contain it. For we know you as the goods-lord of goods.
   Indra, the great giving that is yours—offer it to us, o possessor of the fallow bays.
10. Offer us (a portion) of abundant, all-desirable wealth, o bounteous Indra of the silvery drink.
    Provide a hundred autumns for us to live; (provide) for us ever new heroes, o Indra of the lips.
11. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.37 (271) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
11 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 11

This is a good example of a hymn driven almost entirely by rhetoric. The organizing principle of the hymn is the careful stationing of an accented form of the name *índra* at the beginning of the third pāda (after the hemistich break) in eight of the first nine verses. The middle verse of this sequence (vs. 5) instead has *índra* at the beginning of the verse, and this slight deviation from pattern marks an unemphatic omphalos. As often in R̥gvedic hymnic composition, a pattern set through most of the hymn is both broken and advanced at the end. Verse 10 seems at first to announce the epiphany of the god, which has been desired throughout the hymn; the name of the god has been demoted to unaccented second position, after the annunciatory augmented aorist, the only past tense form in a hymn full of imperatives and presents: "you have come, Indra." The poet has tricked us, however: Indra has come not to us but to fame. The final verse (11) is in a different meter, often a sign of an extra-hymnic verse, but it also emphatically renews the call for Indra's epiphany and therefore provides a fitting end to the rest. The name *índra* opens the final pāda (11d).

The "content" of the hymn is relatively conventional and clearly subordinate to the rhetorical structure, but the light texture and balance of the phrases surrounding the all-important repeated name are quite pleasing.

1. For Vr̥tra-smashing capacity and for victory in battle—
   Indra—we turn you hither.
2. Let the cantors make your mind inclined our way—
   Indra of a hundred resolves—and your eye as well.
3. We implore your names with all our songs—
   Indra of a hundred resolves—in vanquishing hostility.
4. We magnify (him) through the hundred embodiments of the much-praised one,
   of Indra, the supporter of the settled domains.
5. Indra, much invoked, I call toward me to slay Vr̥tra,
   to win spoils in raids.
6. Be victorious when the prize (is set). We implore you,
   Indra of a hundred resolves, to slay Vr̥tra.
7. Amid brilliant outbursts on the battle-drive, amid claims to fame that bring success in battles,
   Indra, be victorious at the hostilities.
8. Drink the most unbridled, brilliant, wakeful soma—
   Indra of a hundred resolves—to aid us.
9. Your Indrian powers that are among the five peoples—
   Indra of a hundred resolves—those I want for myself.

10. You have come, Indra, to lofty fame. Establish for yourself brilliance difficult to surpass.
    We exalt your unbridled power.
11. From nearby come here to us—also, able one, from afar.
    The broad space that is yours—Indra possessor of the stone—from that come here.

III.38 (272) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina or Prajāpati Vaiśvāmitra or Prajāpati Vācya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

A dense and difficult, but rewarding, hymn. Although the hymn is found in the midst of the Maṇḍala III Indra hymns and is assigned to Indra by the Anukramaṇī, the name Indra is not found in the hymn (save in the appended Viśvāmitra refrain), and indeed it is not at all clear that there are any references to Indra in the hymn. Not surprisingly the hymn has given rise to much discussion.

Any interpretation of its contents and intent will necessarily be speculative, and the richness and multivalence of the images should not be reduced to a single and simple paraphrase. Nonetheless, we will attempt a sketch here. It is regularly remarked that the hymn is cosmogonic. In fact, it seems to concern *two* creations: the Ur-creation of undifferentiated material and the subsequent establishment of individual name and form. As usual in ancient India, creation is conceived of as an act of division and individuation, rather than of assemblage. This second, and more interesting, creation was carried out by the equivalent of poets, and the current poet of this hymn identifies himself and his activities with the authors of this second creation and seeks their model for his own poetic work. The large number of neuter pronouns of unclear reference throughout the hymn seem to be a grammatical reflection of the undifferentiated material of the first creation, and the poet seems almost to be inviting us to participate in the second creation by ourselves assigning them name and form.

The poem begins with three verses in the poet's own voice, concerning the older generations of poets and the poetic tradition. In verse 1 he sounds both tremulous and self-assured, mindful of the tradition he belongs to but also proud of his own insight. In the second verse, addressing himself (as so often) in the 2nd person, he exhorts himself to seek models from the earlier poets, and introduces the notion that they "crafted heaven for themselves," a reference to the second creation. The third verse fleshes out this statement, in describing just how the older poets set about this creation. Most important is the final pāda, in which they "put apart" the two worlds—the primal act of separation that makes life possible.

Verse 4 moves abruptly to a new subject, or rather to an older one. A previously unmentioned figure is introduced obliquely, and though he is explicitly credited

with a "name" in pāda c, it is not at all clear what that name is—possibly Viśvarūpa "possessing all forms" of pāda d. In verse 5 it appears that this bull is responsible for the Ur-creation preceding the separation just described. The lack of differentiation in the Ur-creation may be signaled by the androgyny of its source—"the bull gave birth." The same verse also introduces two unnamed kings, "sons/descendants of heaven." This epithet in the dual usually refers to the Aśvins, but this identification seems unlikely here. Other suggested pairs are Mitra and Varuṇa (Grassmann, Geldner) or Indra and Varuṇa (Sāyaṇa, Renou, Oberlies); either pairing is perhaps possible, but the fact that the poet forebears to name them suggests that a precise identification may run counter to the poet's intentions. It might also be noted that the only identifiable dual entities in the hymn are the two world-halves (vss. 3, 8, probably 9), and in verse 8 they "set all in motion." It therefore seems possible that in this hymn the "two descendants of heaven" could in fact be the two worlds, which have dominion over (vs. 5) and tend to (vs. 6) the "(cosmic) division," both as products of the primal separation in the second creation and producers of the further individuation occurring in that second creation: note the increasing numbers in verse 6ab.

In verse 7a we return to the androgynous Ur-creator, now explicitly identified as both bull and cow; the rest of the verse introduces the second creation characterized by "names" and "form." The creators here are "masters of artifice," poets perhaps. Verse 8 essentially repeats verse 7, as is signaled by the identical opening phrase, but this time it is the current poet himself (who made a brief reappearance in vs. 6cd), who by his praise hymn is responsible for movement in the world (i.e., the second creation) contrasted to the static golden emblem (8b) arising from the first creation. The poet thus implicitly identifies himself with the masters of artifice, the poets, in verse 7. In the final verse (aside from the refrain) both the unnamed dual pairing, quite possibly the two worlds, and the masters of artifice return to bear witness to the creative actions of the poet himself, who through his powerful tongue seems to control the individuated forms. We have thus returned to the issues raised in verse 1, but with the poet having successfully assumed his vocation and commanded the respect of his predecessors in the creative act.

1. Like a craftsman I ponder my inspiration. Bending like a prizewinning steed amenable to the chariot-pole,
   touching now on my own dear things, now on distant ones, I seek sage poets to see (these) whole—(though) I (too) have wisdom.
2. Ask also the powerful generations of the poets: they as good workers, holding their minds firm, crafted heaven for themselves.
   These are the precedents for you, which keep growing stronger. Sought by mind they have now come (to rest) on its [=mind's] firm foundation.
3. And, in depositing their own secret (tracks/names) in safety just here, they ornamented the two world-halves for their dominion.

(When) they fully measured (them) with their measures, they held fast the two broad (worlds). They have put apart the two great ones, which were fitted together, to give (us) nourishment.

4. As he was mounting they all tended to him. Donning beauties, he roams about with his own light.
   Great is that name of the bull, the lord. Possessing all forms [/Viśvarūpa], he mounted the immortal (things/worlds).
5. The earlier older bull gave birth. Here are his many proliferating riches.
   You two sons of heaven, with your insights you established your dominion over the (cosmic) division, you kings, from olden days.
6. O kings, you two tended to the three, to the many, to all the seats in the (cosmic) division.
   Having come here with my mind, I saw even the wind-haired Gandharvas under your commandment.
7. This [=undifferentiated creation] was just his—(he who is both) bull (and) milk-cow; (then) with (individual) names they meted out the "fellowship of the cow" [=the joint creation of bull and milk-cow].
   Donning one lordly power after another, the masters of artifice parceled out (individual) form in it.
8. This [=creation] was just his, the impeller's, (it was) nothing of mine— the golden emblem that he fixed firm.
   But it is through (my) good praise hymn that the two world-halves set everything in motion here. He has swaddled the generations, like a young woman her children.
9. You two assure success to (that creation) of the age-old great one, (the creation) that is the divine blessing. May you two enfold us.
   All masters of artifice look upon the deeds of him whose tongue is a herdsman, who surmounts the various forms.
10. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.39 (273) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins (vss. 1–3) with a charming image of poetic thought as a lovely young woman, beautifully arrayed, seeking Indra as her husband and giving birth to twins, who perhaps are two types of ritual speech. The subject changes in verse 4, moving to the mythic past and one of Indra's great deeds: opening the Vala cave

and releasing the cows (of dawn) and by extension the sun (vss. 4–6). The implicit connection between the verses concerning poetic speech and those treating the Vala myth is not expressed, but would be well known to the audience: Indra and his helpers the Aṅgirases (here under the names Navagvas and Daśagvas "nine-cowed" and "ten-cowed") used the power of properly formulated speech to open the cave. This is the mythic model for the poet's use of ritual speech to secure light and safety for the sacrificer and the sacrifice (vss. 7–8).

1. Thought goes toward Indra as her husband, curling herself out of my heart, crafted as praise,
   she who is wakeful when recited at the rite. Indra—what is born for you, know that.
2. Being born of old from heaven itself, wakeful when being recited at the rite,
   clothing herself in auspicious, silvery garments, this one right here in us is the ancient-born, ancestral hymnic vision.
3. She, as bearer of twins, bore her twins [=Ṛc and Sāman?] just here. In soaring, (she) has mounted the tip of the tongue.
   The pair, once born, accompany the wondrous forms (of Agni)—the two, smashing the darkness, have come here to the base of scorching (Agni).
4. There is no one among mortals who scorns them: our fathers, who were battlers for cows.
   Indra with his great force (emptied out) the fastnesses for them, he with his wondrous power emptied out the cowpens.
5. When the comrade with his comrades the Navagvas, the warriors, from their crouch followed after the cows—
   this is the real truth—Indra with the ten Daśagvas found the sun, which was dwelling in darkness.
6. Indra found the concentrated honey in the ruddy one, found the footed and the hooved in the "bend of the cow."
   What was placed in hiding, fit to be hidden, hidden in the waters he took in his right hand—he of right generous gifts.
7. He should choose light, distinguishing it from darkness. May we be at a distance from difficulty in a close encounter.
   Indra, you drinker of soma, increased by soma, enjoy these hymns of the bard, the latest of many.
8. Light for the sacrifice should suffuse the two world-halves. May we be at a distance from abundant difficulty,
   for also in abundance are those who grant good passage to the mightily thrusting mortal, o good ones.
9. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
   the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.40 (274) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn hardly deviates from the theme of Indra's soma-drinking, a concentration that is reflected in the repetitive elements: the vocative *índra* (generally verse- or pāda-initial) in seven of the nine verses (1–6, 9) and the collocation "pressed soma" in four verses (1–2, 4–5) and split over another two (6/7). Note also the conjoined expressions "nearby and afar" (vs. 8) and "afar and nearby" (vs. 9), together forming a "magic square."

1. Indra! We invoke you as bull when the soma is pressed.
   Drink of the honey, of the stalk.
2. Indra! Enjoy the pressed soma that finds the will, you much-praised one.
   Drink it, drench yourself in it—the ever satisfying (soma).
3. Indra! Further our sacrifice, with its emplaced (fires?), along with all the gods,
   o you who are praised as clanlord.
4. Indra! These pressed soma drinks of yours go forth, o master of settlements,
   to your dwelling place—the glimmering drops.
5. Put into your belly the pressed soma worthy to be chosen, Indra.
   Yours are the heaven-ruling drops.
6. O you longing for songs, drink our pressed (soma). With streams of honey are you anointed.
   Indra! Just by you is glory given.
7. The imperishable heavenly effusions of the wooden (vessel) attend on Indra.
   Having drunk of the soma, he is grown strong.
8. From nearby come here to us, and from afar, Vṛtra-smasher.
   Enjoy these songs of ours.
9. If you are invoked between the far and the nearby,
   Indra, come here from there.

III.41 (275) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: gāyatrī

An elementary hymn, focused entirely on the ritual and on Indra's journey to it and participation in it. In this it is reminiscent of III.35, though in a different meter, and

like that hymn this one entirely lacks praise of the god, reference to his past deeds, and prayers for his gifts and aid.

1. You, Indra, when you are called to drink our soma,
   drive here toward me with your pair of fallow bays, o possessor of the (pressing) stone.
2. Our Hotar was seated at his season; the ritual grass has been strewn in due order.
   The pressing stones were yoked in the early morning.
3. Here are the sacred formulations being made, o you whose vehicle is the formulation. Sit on the ritual grass;
   seek after the offering cake, o champion.
4. Take pleasure in our pressings, in these praises, o Vr̥tra-smasher,
   in hymns, o Indra who longs for songs.
5. Thoughts lick the broad, soma-drinking lord of strength,
   Indra—like mothers a calf.
6. Find exhilaration from the stalk, then, to show great generosity with your own person.
   You will not put your praiser to scorn.
7. Offering our oblations, we sing, seeking you, o Indra,
   and you are seeking us, you good one.
8. Do not unharness at a distance from us; drive nearby, you who are dear to your fallow bays.
   O autonomous Indra, become exhilarated here.
9. Let the two hairy(-maned horses) convey you nearby in a well-naved chariot, Indra,
   the two with ghee on their backs—(for you) to sit on the ritual grass.

III.42 (276) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: gāyatrī

Another straightforward hymn centered on the soma-drinking, very similar to the immediately preceding III.41.

1. Come up to our pressed soma mixed with milk, Indra,
   you who, with your pair of fallow bays, are seeking us.
2. Come, Indra, to the exhilarating drink, stationed on the ritual grass, pressed by stones.
   Will you now indeed sate yourself on it?
3. To Indra have my songs gone just so, sent from here,
   to turn him hither for soma-drinking.

4. Indra we call here for soma-drinking with praises,
with hymns. Will he indeed come hither?
5. Indra! Here are the pressed soma-drinks. Put them
into your belly, o you of a hundred resolves, you rich in prizewinners.
6. Because we know you as one winning the stakes, as one daring in prize-contests, you sage,
therefore we beg for your favor.
7. Drink this (soma) of ours mixed with milk and mixed with grain, Indra,
having come here to the (soma) pressed by the bullish (stones).
8. Just to you, Indra, in my own house, do I impel the soma for drinking.
Let it find pleasure in your heart.
9. You, Indra, do we call to drink the pressed drink, as of old—
we, the Kuśikas, seeking your favor.

III.43 (277) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Although this hymn, like the two immediately preceding it (41, 42), focuses on Indra's journey to and presence at the soma sacrifice, its texture is richer and its rhetoric more shapely. (It is also in the longer triṣṭubh meter, rather than the gāyatrī of the previous two.) The first four verses insistently establish the journey motif with the opening "Here—drive" (*ā́ … yāhi*, vss. 1–3) / "Here … " (*ā́*, vs. 4), along with an abundance of adverbs meaning "here, nearby, up close." Verse 5 consists of four rhetorical questions, each introduced by the interrogative particle *kuvíd*, implicitly begging Indra's intervention on the singer's behalf. The initial "Here … " and the journey motif return in verse 6; verse 7, the last before the refrain, invites Indra, presumably finally arrived, to drink the soma, inserting brief mentions of two well-known myths, the falcon's stealing of soma and Indra's opening of Vala. As is common in these journey hymns, Indra's horses have a prominent part in the hymn (see esp. vs. 6, but also vss. 1–4).

1. Here—drive right up nearby, stationed on the chariot seat. Just yours is the soma-drinking from olden days.
Your two dear comrades—unharness them at the ritual grass. These oblation-bearers are calling you.
2. Here—drive across the many settled domains—here, across the prayers of the stranger, right up to us, with your two fallow bays,
for these thoughts, crafted as praise, are calling you, Indra, taking pleasure in your fellowship.

3. Here—drive swiftly to our sacrifice, which has grown strong with reverence, o god Indra, together with your fallow bays,
   for I keep calling you with my thoughts, (offering) a delightful dish of ghee, to the joint revelry of the honey drinks.
4. Here—if these bullish fallow bays will convey you, the two well-limbed comrades amenable to the chariot-pole—
   taking pleasure in the pressing accompanied by the roasted grain, will Indra, as our comrade, hear the tributes of his comrade?
5. Will you indeed make me your herdsman of the people; will you indeed (make me) king, you bounteous possessor of the silvery drink?
   Will you indeed (make) me a seer, (for) I have drunk of the pressed drink; will you indeed do your best for immortal goods for me?
6. Here—let the lofty fallow bays, on being yoked, joint revelers, convey you nearby, Indra,
   (the horses) that once again stretch forth the doorposts of heaven, the well-curried dumb (beasts) of the bull [=Indra].
7. Indra, drink of the bullish (soma), rinsed by the bulls [=priests], which the falcon brought here to you, who wanted it,
   in whose exhilaration you rouse the communities, in whose exhilaration you opened up the cowpens.
8. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
   the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.44 (278) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: bṛhatī

The major trick of this short hymn is the extended pun between the words *hári* "gold-colored" (also used regularly for Indra's "fallow bay" horses) and *harya* "enjoy," a pun exploited elsewhere. (For a far more elaborate example, see X.96.) For the purposes of this hymn, we have rendered the former as "golden," even in reference to the horses, and the latter as "gladden(ing)," in an attempt to sketch the pun in English. In the last verse the poet slyly turns the golden mace of verse 4 into silver, a move that would surely have caught the attention of the audience.

1. Let this be gladdening to you—the soma pressed here by the golden (stones).
   Rejoicing, Indra, come here to us along with your golden (horses).
   Mount the golden chariot.

2. Being glad, you made the dawn beam; being glad, you made the sun shine.
   Knowing, observant, you wax strong over all the beauties, o Indra of the golden horses.
3. Heaven with its golden nourishment, Earth with its golden form did Indra
   hold firm, (and there was) abundant feeding of the two golden ones [=Heaven and Earth], between which the golden one [=Sun] wanders.
4. Once born, the golden bull radiates through the whole luminous realm.
   Having golden horses, he takes the golden weapon, the golden mace into his two arms.
5. Indra (uncovered) the silvery mace glad (in its work), decked out with gleaming (flames?),
   uncovered the soma pressed with golden stones; he drove out the cows with the golden ones.

III.45 (279) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: bṛhatī

The hymn begins by inviting Indra to "drive here," as is familiar from the previous "journey" hymns in this Indra cycle (e.g., III.41, 42, 43), but it soon turns to a series of striking and elaborate similes and metaphorical identifications glorifying Indra and his gifts. The middle verse (3) contains four separate similes and so, as often, represents the concentrated essence of the hymn.

1. Drive here, Indra, with your gladdening fallow bays, whose hair is (like) peacocks'.
   Let no one hold you down, as men using snares do a bird. Go across them, as if across wasteland.
2. Gnawer of Vṛtra, breaker of Vala, splitter of strongholds, driver of waters,
   mounter of the chariot, caller of the two fallow bays—Indra is the one who breaks apart even the fastnesses.
3. Your resolve, deep like pools—you foster it, like cows.
   As milk-cows with a good herdsman reach pasturage, as brooks reach a lake, (so your resolves) have reached fulfillment.
4. Bring here to us thrusting wealth, like a share to the one who acknowledges it.
   As a man with a crook shakes a tree for ripe fruit, o Indra, shake (us) goods that will get (us) across.

5. Self-seeking, you are self-ruling, and, along with (the gifts you) allot, exceptionally self-glorious, o Indra.
   Having increased in strength, much-praised one, become the one who most receives our praises.

III.46 (280) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Most of the hymn is devoted to generic praise of Indra, and especially of his immense proportions (see the nicely balanced rhetoric of the middle verse 3). The last verse and a half (4cd, 5) turn to the ritual situation, the early-morning soma-pressing for Indra.

1. Of you, the fighter, the bull, the sovereign king, the strong youth, stalwart, ardent,
   of the unaging bearer of the mace—great are the manly deeds of you, o Indra, famous and great.
2. You are great, you buffalo, with your bullish powers—winning the spoils, you strong one, overwhelming the others.
   As sole king of all creation, cause the peoples to fight and to dwell in peace.
3. He projects in his dimensions, while shining; he projects on all sides, unopposable by the gods;
   Indra projects with his greatness beyond heaven, beyond earth; projects beyond the great broad atmosphere—he who possesses the silvery drink.
4. Him—broad, deep, over(whelmingly) strong (even) at birth, encompassing all, a well of thoughts—
   Indra—do the pressed soma drinks enter early in the day, like streams the sea.
5. The soma that Heaven and Earth bear, like a mother an embryo, with longing for you, Indra,
   that do the Adhvaryus impel to you, that do they groom, o bull, for you to drink.

III.47 (281) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This ritually focused hymn is appropriate to the Midday Pressing, where Indra drinks soma in company with the Maruts. Both Indra and the Maruts are named in every verse, and all but the final verse contain an imperative of the

verb “drink.” The Maruts’ role in strengthening Indra for his various exploits is treated in verses 3–4.

1. Accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, as a bull drink the soma after your wont, for joy, for exhilaration.
   Pour the wave of honey into your belly. You are the king of the pressed drinks from olden days.
2. In joint enjoyment, Indra, in joint throng with the Maruts, drink the soma, o champion, as Vṛtra-smasher and knowing one.
   Smash the rivals, push away the despisers. Then make fearlessness for us on all sides.
3. And, seasonable drinker, according to the (right, ritual) seasons take a drink of the soma pressed by us, o Indra, with the gods [=Maruts] as your comrades,
   the Maruts to whom you gave a share (in the soma), who stood by you: you smashed Vṛtra; they established strength for you.
4. Those who strengthened you at the serpent-smashing, bounteous one, who in the fight with Śambara, who at the quest for cattle, o you of the fallow bays,
   who as inspired poets applaud you now—o Indra, drink soma in joint throng with the Maruts.
5. Him accompanied by the Maruts, the bull grown strong, not stingy, the heavenly commander—Indra—
   the all-conquering, mighty giver of strength—him we would invoke here for present help.

III.48 (282) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: triṣṭubh

In this short hymn (four verses, without the refrain) we are given a tantalizing glimpse of Indra’s infancy and what appears to be his youthful rivalry with and outsmarting and overcoming of his father, here as sometimes elsewhere identified with Tvaṣṭar; in these activities he is seemingly abetted by his mother. In this primal scene she offers Indra soma just after his birth, and he, having drunk it, defeats his father and steals the soma. Unfortunately this brief sketch is the fullest and clearest expression of this mythological background. See also IV.18.

1. Immediately on his birth the young bull showed favor to the ritual offering of the pressed stalk.
   Drink—at pleasure, however your (pleasure) is—the first of the somian sap-mixture that brings success.

2. When you were born, on that day in desire for it [=soma] you drank the mountain-abiding beestings of the plant.
   Your mother, the young woman who gave you birth, poured it around for you in the house of your great father for the first time.
3. On approaching his mother, he called for food; he looked upon the sharp soma as his udder.
   Clever, he took care to keep away the others; of manifold countenances, he performed great things himself.
4. Strong, overcoming the powerful, of overwhelming strength—he made his body as he wished.
   Having overwhelmed Tvaṣṭar at his birth, Indra, having stolen the soma, drank it in the cups.
5. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
   the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.49 (283) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The first word of this hymn, *śáṃsā* "I will proclaim" (or possibly 2nd sg. imperative "proclaim!"), sets the tone for the rest, which consists entirely of descriptive glorification (save for the refrain). There are no direct requests, though the praise of his victorious power and of his control of goods implicitly invites the god to exert the same for the singer and his community.

1. I will proclaim great Indra, toward whom all the soma-drinking communities have directed their desire,
   the very resolute one, fashioned for distinction, whom the two Holy Places [=Heaven and Earth] and the gods begot as the bane of obstacles.
2. The most manly sovereign king, mounted on fallow bays, whom now as before no one overcomes in battles,
   who along with his warriors is strongest through our fortifying (hymns). He in his broad expansion curtailed the lifetime of the Dasyu.
3. Victorious in battles like an overtaking steed, traversing the two world-halves, streaming abundance.
   Like Bhaga at the decisive moment, he is to be invoked with thoughts; like a father, he is dear, easy to invoke, conferring vigor.
4. As supporter of heaven, of the dusky realm, he is inquired after; erect like a chariot, he is (like) Vāyu teamed with goods.

Illuminator of the nights, generator of the sun, he distributes the share,
like the Holy Place [=ritual ground] the prize.

5. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.50 (284) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This brief "journey" hymn signals its application to the Midday Pressing by the adjective "accompanied by the Maruts" ending the first half-verse; the usual mention of Indra's horses in journey hymns is also found. In addition to the refrain (vs. 5), verse 4 is also a repetition, of the near final verse of the first Indra hymn in this maṇḍala (III.30.20). Since III.50 is the final hymn in the regular sequence of Indra hymns in III (III.51 is a collection of tr̥cas in various meters; III.52–53 are similarly various), the double repetition seems to act as a ring-compositional device to mark the end of the Indra cycle.

1. At "*Svāhā!*" let Indra drink, to whom the soma belongs. On coming here, bulging, bullish, accompanied by the Maruts,
let him, though (already) of broad extent, become filled with these foods. Might the oblation bring to fulfillment the desire of his body.
2. I yoke for you these two obliging (horses) for speed, whose obedience you favored from olden days.
Here should the fallow bays deposit you, you of good lips. Drink of this pleasing well-pressed (soma).
3. While being hymned, (the horses? priests?) have established (the soma) desirous of mixture with cows [=milk], to nourish Indra, the deliverer, for preeminence.
Becoming invigorated once having drunk the soma, you of the silvery drink, drive together cows in quantity for us.
4. Invigorate this desire with cows, with horses, with recompense in gold, and you will (further) spread it out.
Seeking the sun, the inspired poets, the Kuśikas, have made with their thoughts a (ritual) conveyance for you, for Indra.
5. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

III.51 (285) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
12 verses: jagatī 1–3, triṣṭubh 4–9, gāyatrī 10–12, arranged in tr̥cas

The hymn falls into four sets of tr̥cas, in three different meters. Since the hymn follows one of five verses, each tr̥ca should originally have been a single hymn, to conform to the normal patterns of arrangement within maṇḍalas. However, even if it did consist originally of four separate hymns, the evidence of larger ring composition discussed with regard to III.50 makes it likely that III.51 was an addition to the original Indra collection, which would once have ended with III.50.

The first two tr̥cas consist of standard tropes of praise for Indra, with an emphasis on the songs and singers that express this praise. There are no strong indications of unity within the tr̥cas. The third tr̥ca is devoted to Indra's drinking of soma in company with the Maruts and is thus appropriate to the Midday Pressing, like several other Indra hymns in this maṇḍala (III.32, 35, 47, 50). The final tr̥ca is even more insistently focused on Indra's soma-drinking.

1. The bounteous supporter of the settled domains, worthy of hymns—to Indra have the lofty songs roared—
   the much-invoked one, having grown strong through well-turned (hymns), immortal, awakening every day.
2. The superior man with a hundred resolves, a flood of powers—my songs approach Indra from all sides—
   winning spoils, splitting strongholds, swift at crossing the waters, attending to the ordinances, attending closely, finding the sun.
3. The singer seeks admiration from him who distributes goods: Indra gives a friendly reception to his faultless rhythms,
   for at the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground] he finds pleasure. Praise him, victorious in every way, the smasher of hostility.

4. You [=Indra], the most manly of men—you [=singers], recite to the hero forcefully with songs, with hymns.
   Possessing many magical powers, he compacts himself together for might. Reverence is his. From olden days he alone is lord.
5. Many are the tributes to him among mortals; many goods does the earth bear (for him).
   For Indra the heavens, the plants, and the waters guard their wealth, and the lively (streams) and woods.
6. For you the sacred formulations, for you the songs altogether have been established, o Indra of the fallow bays. Enjoy them!
   Become a friend of help right now; o comrade, o good one, establish vigor for the singers.

7. O Indra along with the Maruts, drink the soma here, as you drank of the pressed (soma) beside Śāryāta.
   With your guidance, in your shelter, o champion, the wise poets of good sacrifices seek their win.
8. Eagerly desirous, here drink the soma pressed by us, o Indra, with the Maruts as your comrades—
   as when all the gods busied themselves around you, just born, for great plunder, o much-invoked one.
9. At the crossing of the waters, o Maruts, he is a friend. They, who give favors, have applauded Indra.
   Together with them let the Vṛtra-gnawer drink the pressed soma in the very seat of the pious worshiper.

10. Because this pressed (drink) is right here at hand with its strength, o lord of benefits,
    drink of it, o you who long for song.
11. Which(ever soma drink) will suit your nature, halt yourself at that pressing.
    Let it exhilarate you, who deserve the soma.
12. Let it reach to your two cheeks, to your head, Indra, (accompanied) by a sacred formulation—
    to your two arms, o champion, for (you) to give.

III.52 (286) Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
8 verses: gāyatrī 1–4; triṣṭubh 5, 7–8; jagatī 6

This hymn is also an addition to the Indra collection. Entirely parallel to III.28 (a hymn to Agni), it concerns the offering of a sacrificial cake at each pressing of the soma sacrifice, with each pressing characterized by a different meter. The Morning Pressing is the subject of verses 1–4; the Midday Pressing (amply represented in other hymns of this cycle: see the introduction to III.51) merits only one verse (5), and the Third Pressing is likewise mentioned only once (vs. 6). The remaining two verses appear to have a more general application.

1. (The soma) accompanied by roasted grain, by gruel, by cakes, by hymns—
   Indra, enjoy (this soma) of ours early in the morning.
2. The cooked offering cake—enjoy it, Indra, and welcome it.
   To you do the oblations flow.
3. Our offering cake you shall eat, and you shall take pleasure in our songs,
   as a bride-seeking man does a maiden.

4. Enjoy our offering cake at the Morning Pressing.
   O Indra famed of old, lofty indeed is your resolve.

5. The roasted grains of the Midday Pressing, the offering cake—Indra, make them your own dear (possessions) here,
   when the praiser, the singer, (going) forth swift to his task, acting the bull, reverently invokes you with hymns.

6. At the Third Pressing, our roasted grains, our offering cake bepoured (with ghee)—grant them to yourself, much-praised one.
   Might we, dispensing ritual delights, entice you here with our hymnic visions, o poet—you accompanied by the R̥bhus, provided with prizes.

7. We made gruel for you who are accompanied by Pūṣan, roasted grains for you of the fallow bay horses, accompanied by your fallow bays.
   Eat the cake; in joint throng with the Maruts drink the soma, o hero, as Vr̥tra-smasher and knowing one.

8. Bring the roasted grains swiftly toward him, the offering cake for the most virile of men.
   Every day there are (roasted grains) with the same appearance for you, Indra. Let them strengthen you for soma-drinking, daring one.

III.53 (287) Indra, etc.

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
24 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 10, 16; anuṣṭubh 12, 20, 22; gāyatrī 13; br̥hatī 18

This sprawling hymn, a supplement to the Indra collection, consists of at least six different sections in five different meters. There is little or no connection among the parts, which were probably originally independent. However, the whole seems intended to glorify the poet Viśvāmitra and his family, the Kuśikas, as well as his patron, King Sudās, and the Bharatas. Moreover, several of the different parts have clear reminiscences of other hymns in the Indra cycle of this maṇḍala, and so the hymn serves as a sort of summary of the themes of this Indra collection.

The beginning of the hymn (vss. 1–6) is the most conventional part, with its invitation to Indra to come to our ritual with gifts and to drink the soma. The most interesting feature is the mention of the pleasures of wife and home (vss. 4–6) and the envoi to Indra in verse 6, urging him to go home after consuming the soma at our sacrifice. (See also I.82.5–6.) This dismissal seems appropriate to the final hymn of the Indra collection and may in part account for this little hymn being appended here.

The next section (vss. 7–14) is subtly soldered to the first: the final word of verse 6 is *dákṣiṇāvat* “accompanied by priestly gifts,” while the first phrase of verse 7 is *imé bhojā́ḥ* “these benefactors”—the word *bhojá* is used throughout the hymn devoted to the dakṣiṇā (X.106) to refer to the bestowers of the priestly gifts. The whole of this second section concerns the relationship of the poet Viśvāmitra and his family with his patron, King Sudās and his people, the Bharatas, via the mediation of Indra, whose powers the poet can command for the sake of Sudās and his subjects because of his poetic gifts. There are several reminiscences of previous Indra hymns in III. Verse 7, with the patrons compared to the Aṅgirases, recalls the extensive treatment of the Aṅgirases in III.31. Verse 9 gives a synopsis of III.33, in which Viśvāmitra stops the rivers flowing so Sudās and his troops can cross; the name Sudās is mentioned in this story only here. Viśvāmitra’s family, the Kuśikas, are found here in verses 9–11; in III.33.5 he calls himself “the son of Kuśika,” and a repeated verse containing the plural of the name serves as a ring-compositional marker for the whole of the Indra cycle of Maṇḍala III (III.30.20 = III.50.4), as discussed in the introduction to the latter hymn. This section ends with a slighting mention of a rival and apparently non-sacrificing group, whom Indra is urged to subjugate to Sudās and the Bharatas.

The next two verses (15–16) are the most mysterious in the hymn; they both concern a female figure identified as *sasarparī́*, the formation and etymology of which is unclear and which may either be a proper name or an attributive characterizing adjective. (Our translation, “the squirming, sappy (cow called) Sasarparī,” is a portmanteau containing both adjectives evoked by the phonology and morphology of the word and the proper name; we consider it a multiple semi-pun.) The Anukramaṇī assigns these two verses to Vāc [=“speech”] Sasarparī, and some scholars consider that the figure the embodiment of the Kuśikas’ verbal art. In any case she seems to be responsible for the fame of the people she aids.

The next four verses (17–20) appear to have no connection with the rest of the hymn. They are prayers to deflect various possible catastrophes that might befall a team of oxen and the vehicle they pull on a journey, and wish for safe return. This section reads as if it were a continuation of or expansion on the Zauberspruch at the end of III.33 against potential difficulties afflicting a team and its wagon at a ford.

The final four verses (21–24) are very difficult to interpret. They have traditionally been taken as the expression of the implacable hostility between Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, which is a staple of later texts (e.g., the Mahābhārata). But there is no whiff of this personal hostility in the R̥gveda, in our opinion, and there is certainly no mention of Vasiṣṭha, direct or indirect, in the verses here. There is, however, hostility: verse 21 calls on Indra to help us defeat our enemy, and the next few verses express in colorful images the impotence of the enemy’s actions and weapons. The most puzzling verse is the final one, where the Bharatas, the people

of Sudās, celebrated in verse 12, appear to be presented in an unflattering light. We have no explanation for this.

1. O Indra and "Mountain" [=Indra's mace?], with a lofty chariot convey hither precious nourishments, providing good heroes.
   Pursue the oblations at our ceremonies, o gods. Become strengthened by our hymns, becoming exhilarated on the refreshing drink.
2. Stay just so, bounteous one; don't go away. I will sacrifice to you from the well-pressed soma.
   I grasp your hem like a son his father's—Indra, powerful one—with the sweetest hymn.
3. Let us both recite, Adhvaryu: sing in response to me. Let us both make a vehicle enjoyable to Indra.
   Sit right here on the ritual grass of the sacrificer. And then the hymn will be recited to Indra.
4. Just the wife is the home; she is the womb. Let your yoked fallow bays convey you to it.
   Whenever we will press soma, Agni the messenger will run to you.
5. Drive yon, bounteous one, and drive hither. Brother Indra, in both places there is a goal for you,
   where there is a resting place for your lofty chariot and unhitching for your prizewinning donkey.
6. You have drunk the soma; drive forth home, Indra: your lovely wife, a great delight, is in your house,
   where there is a resting place for your lofty chariot and unhitching accompanied by (priestly) gifts for your prizewinner.

7. These benefactors, the Aṅgirases in different form, sons of heaven, heroes of the Lord,
   giving bounties to Viśvāmitra at the Pressing of a Thousand, lengthen their own lifetime.
8. Form after form the bounteous one assumes, wrapping his own body in tricks,
   when three times a day he has come here from heaven in an instant, drinking out of turn by (the power of) his own (magic) spells, (though) he possesses the truth.
9. The great seer—god-begotten, god-sped, (though) possessing a man's sight—stayed the river in flood.
   When Viśvāmitra conveyed Sudās (across the rivers), Indra made friends with the Kuśikas.
10. Like geese, you make a signaling call with the pressing stones, becoming exhilarated on hymns at the ceremony when (the soma) is pressed.

You inspired seers who have the sight of men, along with the gods drink the somian honey, you Kuśikas.

11. Come forth, Kuśikas; make yourselves known. Release the horse of Sudās, to (gain) wealth.
    The king will smash the obstacle to the east, to the west, to the north. Then he will sacrifice on the best part of the earth.
12. I who have praised both these two world-halves here and Indra—
    Viśvāmitra's sacred formulation here guards the Bharata people.
13. The Viśvāmitras have given the formulation to Indra who bears the mace.
    He will make us well rewarded.
14. What do the cows do for you among the Kīkaṭas? They do not milk out the milk mixture; they do not heat the gharma[=hot]-drink.
    Bring here to us the possessions of Pramaganda. Make the descendant of Nīcāśākha subject to us, bounteous one.

15. The squirming, sappy (cow called) Sasarparī, given by the Jamadagnis, banishing neglect, has bellowed loftily.
    (She like) the Daughter of the Sun has stretched (their [=the Jamadagnis']) fame, immortal and unaging, to the gods.
16. The squirming, sappy (cow called) Sasarparī swiftly brought fame to them among the communities of the five peoples,
    having taken on new life (like Dawn, though) in her winglessness, she whom the Palastis and Jamadagnis gave me.

17. Let the two oxen be steadfast, the axle firm; let the chariot-pole not be torn off, nor the yoke be broken off.
    Let Indra keep the two pātalyas [=pieces of chariot?] from breaking. You with indestructible wheel-rims, escort us.
18. Put power in our bodies, power in our draft-oxen, Indra—
    power for our kith and kin to live, for you are the giver of power.
19. Engird yourself in the hardwood of the acacia tree; place strength in the śiṃśapā(-wood) in its recoil.
    O Axle, you who are firm and were made firm, stay firm. Don't make us leave off from this journey.
20. Let this Lord of the Forest [=tree] here not leave us behind and not cause us harm.
    (Let there be) well-being all the way to the houses, to the unharnessing, to the unhitching.

21. Indra, with your manifold means of help, which are the best possible ones, quicken us today, bounteous champion.
    Whoever hates us, let him fall low. Whomever we hate, let breath leave him.

22. (Though) he heats his axe all the way through, it's just a śimbala flower
 he hacks off.
 The ukhā-pot, (though) boiling, boiling over, just throws off foam,
 o Indra.
23. There is no notice taken of his missile, you people. They lead a lump,
 thinking it a beast.
 (But) they are not making a non-prizewinner race with a prizewinner,
 nor leading a donkey before the horses.
24. Are *these* the sons of Bharata, Indra? They take note of the non-meal,
 not the meal.
 They spur the alien horse, not their own. At the contest they lead
 around the one whose prize is (just) a bowstring.

III.54 (288) All Gods

Prajāpati Vaiśvāmitra or Prajāpati Vācya
22 verses: triṣṭubh

This first hymn to the All Gods in this maṇḍala is something of a hybrid, combining two standard approaches to All God hymns. On the one hand, the second half of the hymn (starting with vs. 11) treats these deities as a list, granting a verse each to a number of gods and mentioning their familiar characteristics. This part is relatively straightforward.

The first half, especially verses 2–9, is ostensibly devoted to Heaven and Earth, but, though it begins as a conventional praise of those paired deities, as often in All God hymns the divinity provides a point of departure for speculation on the nature of things and unanswered questions about cosmic matters; see especially the questions in verse 5, at the middle of this self-contained hymn-within-a-hymn. The emphasis on truth and reality and on the discovery of Heaven and Earth (for both themes see vss. 3–4), in combination with the uncertain questions, suggests that the point is that we only gradually and imperfectly discover the real dimensions and nature of the cosmos. The style in this portion is enigmatic, intense, and rhetorically intricate, especially in the climactic verse 9, where Heaven as the divine begetter, and perhaps the single principle, and heaven as a place, the home of the gods to which we also aspire, seem to be referred to simultaneously. This double reference is aided by the ambiguity of the first verb in the verse, *ádhy emi*, which can mean either "I go upon" or "I study." Verse 10 clearly closes off that part of the hymn and makes the transition to the second part and its list of favored gods.

The hymn begins with a verse to Agni and ends with a verse and a half to him, thus providing a larger ring around the two very different halves.

1. This fortifying (hymn) here have they presented to the great one belonging to the rite, who is to be reverently invoked repeatedly time after time.
   Let him listen to us with his faces belonging to the house; let inexhaustible Agni listen with (his faces) belonging to heaven.
2. I will recite a great (hymn) to great Heaven and to Earth. My desire, seeking, knowing the way, goes (to those two),
   at the praise of whom the gods, seeking service at the rites, become exhilarated in company with them.
3. Let your truth be real, you two world-halves. Come to the fore for our great welfare.
   Here is homage to Heaven and to Earth, o Agni. I render service with a pleasurable offering; I beg for a treasure.
4. For also the ancient ones, speaking what is real, found you two, you truthful world-halves.
   Also the superior men at the clash, at the contest of champions, extolled you two, o (Heaven and) Earth, as they kept discovering you.
5. Who knows for certain? Who will here proclaim (it)? What is the pathway that leads to the gods?
   Their lowest seats are visible, (but those) that are amid the highest hidden commandments… ?
6. The sage poet, (though) having a man's sight, has looked upon them: the two [=Heaven and Earth], separated but becoming exhilarated (together) in the womb of truth.
   The two have made a seat each for herself as a bird does, (though) being united by a joint purpose.
7. Jointly but kept apart, with their ends at a distance, they have taken their stand in a fixed place, wakeful.
   And (though) they are sisters and young women, they are called opposing names.
8. All these races do the two contain. (Though) supporting the great gods, they do not waver.
   The One is master of all: the moving and the fixed, the walking and the flying, of various sorts, variously born.
9. From afar I tread upon the ancient (path) of old [/study the ancient One of old]: that is our relationship to the great father [=Heaven?], the begetter,
   where [=in heaven?] the gods, as admirers, in their own ways took their stand within (it) on their (own) broad separate path.
10. This praise here I proclaim, you two world-halves. The tender-hearted ones having Agni as their tongue will hear it—
    the youthful sovereign kings, Mitra, Varuṇa, the Ādityas, sage poets, extending far and wide.

11. Savitar of the golden hands and the lovely tongue, being master at the rite three times a day—
    and (when), Savitar, you have set your signal-call among the gods, then impel wholeness to us.
12. Of good action, of good hands, of good aid, truthful—let God Tvaṣṭar establish these things for us for help.
    In company with Pūṣan, o R̥bhus, make yourselves exhilarated. With pressing stones raised, you have fashioned the ceremony.
13. The Maruts with lighting as their chariot, brandishing spears, the young bloods of heaven, born of truth, irrepressible,
    and Sarasvatī—those worthy of the sacrifice will listen. Confer wealth along with heroes, you powerful ones.
14. The recitations, the chants have gone to Viṣṇu of many wonders as if on a journey of victorious Bhaga—
    (Viṣṇu) the wide-striding humped (bull), who has many (women). The young mothers-to-be are not neglectful.
15. Indra, being master by virtue of all his heroic powers, filled both world-halves with his greatness,
    stronghold-splitter, Vr̥tra-smasher, possessor of a bold host. Having massed it together, bring to us here an abundance of livestock.
16. The Nāsatyas, asked about our kinship, are my fathers. Our cherished name is our common birth with the Aśvins.
    Because you are wealth-givers of wealth to us, you keep watch over giving with unstinting (gifts), as undeceivable ones.
17. Great is this cherished name of yours, o poets [=R̥bhus], that you all become "gods" to Indra.
    You are partner with the dear R̥bhus, much-invoked one. (All of you,) fashion this insight here for us to win.
18. Aryaman, Aditi, (all those) worthy of our sacrifice—the commandments of Varuṇa cannot be cheated—
    (all of you,) keep us from coming to childlessness. Let our course be full of offspring and livestock.
19. The messenger of the gods, impelled forth in many forms—let him pronounce us blameless in our entirety.
    Let Earth, Heaven, and the Waters hear us, and the Sun with the heavenly bodies, and the broad midspace.
20. Let the bullish mountains with stable dwelling places hear us, as they become exhilarated on the refreshing drink.
    Let Aditi with the Ādityas hear us. Let the Maruts extend to us beneficial shelter.

21. Let our path be always easy to travel, abounding in food. Gods, saturate the plants with honey.
    (Let there be) a share in your fellowship for me, Agni. You should not be neglectful. Might I reach the seat of wealth consisting in much livestock.
22. Sweeten our oblations, illuminate our refreshments entirely. Mete out full measures of fame in our direction.
    Conquer all our rivals in combat, Agni. Through all the days, shine benevolently on us.

III.55 (289) All Gods

Prajāpati Vaiśvāmitra or Prajāpati Vācya
22 verses: triṣṭubh

The most obvious feature of this hymn is the refrain found in every verse: "great is the one and only lordship of the gods," notable for its emphasis on unity (*ékam* "one and only" is the final word of each verse) and for the juxtaposition and implied identity of *asura(tvám)* "lord(ship)" and *devā́nām* "gods," given that in later Vedic the Asuras and the Devas are locked in eternal enmity. This familiar Vedic mystery of simultaneous unity and diversity is further exemplified by the references to numerous gods (generally unnamed, but usually recognizable), especially in the second part of the hymn, in the manner of many All God hymns.

However, the hymn has a more structured trajectory than most All God list hymns. The first part of the hymn treats the mystery of the birth of Agni; once Agni has been definitively born, Indra comes to the sacrifice as is usual. After three verses situating the action at a re-creation of the primordial early-morning sacrifice and introducing the poet (vss. 1–3), the hymn turns to a mystical description of fire dispersed in many places and hidden in the plants (4–5), and of its parents, the two kindling sticks (4–7), then of fire as it catches after the kindling (8–9) and sends its smoke and flames toward heaven (9–10). The kindling of Agni then takes on both a cosmic and a ritual dimension, as Night and Dawn and then the Dawns alone are identified as the mother(s) of the infant Agni, reflecting, of course, the kindling of the ritual fire at daybreak (11–16). Soon after (17–18) Indra puts in an appearance, coming to the early-morning sacrifice.

Not all the referents are clear in these riddling verses, and in some verses several referents probably lurk beneath the enigmatic phraseology. For example, verse 17 serves as a transition verse between the fire-kindling verses and the appearance of Indra. The bull here could be Agni himself, or Soma (much of the vocabulary is

somian), or a prefiguring of Indra. Commentators differ in their identifications, and those given in brackets here are sometimes provisional.

1. Then when the ancient dawns dawned forth, in the track of the cow a great imperishable (syllable) was born [/was discerned],
   which tends to the commandments of the gods: great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
2. Let not the gods deflect us here, nor the ancient Fathers who know the track [/word], o Agni.
   Between the two seats of the two age-old ones [=Heaven and Earth] is your beacon. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
3. My desires fly apart in many directions, but with my (ritual) labor I illuminate ancient things.
   When Agni has been kindled might we speak only truth: "Great is the one and only lordship of the gods."
4. The common king has been dispersed in many places; he lies in his resting places [=hearths], (spread out) for some distance along the (fire-)logs.
   Another bears the calf; the mother rests peacefully [=the two fire-churning sticks]. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
5. He is dwelling in the older (plants), growing up through the later ones, within the tender ones (even) when they are just born.
   Having (him) within, (though) unimpregnated they give birth to (him). – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
6. He who was lying down far away—now he who has two mothers roams without a binding (rope), their only calf.
   These are the commandments of Mitra and Varuṇa: Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
7. The one with two mothers is the Hotar, the sovereign king at the rites. The top (of him) roams along (the logs), while his base rests peacefully.
   Those who speak delightful (speech) proffer delightful (things). – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
8. His every approach appears right in your face, like that of a champion battling up close.
   The thought acts as go-between to the tribute of the cow [=ghee as oblation]. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
9. The gray messenger [=smoke] keeps bearing down on them [=hearths? plants?]. The great one acts the go-between through the luminous realm.
   Bearing wondrous forms, he looks out upon us. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.

10. Viṣṇu, the cow-protector, protects the highest pen, establishing his own dear, immortal domains.
    Agni knows all these worlds. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
11. The twins [=Night and Dawn] have assumed wondrous forms, each one for herself. One of them shines; the other is black;
    the dusky one and the ruddy one are sisters. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
12. Where the mother and the daughter [also =Night and Dawn], the two sap-yielding milk-cows, give suck jointly,
    I reverently invoke the two within the seat of truth. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
13. Licking the calf [=Agni] of another [=firestick/Night], she [=oblation/Dawn] lows: in what form has the milk-cow deposited her udder?
    Iḍā [/Refreshment] has swelled with the milk of truth. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
14. At her feet she of many shapes [=Dawn] clothes herself in wondrous forms. She stands erect, constantly licking the (calf) three lambing-seasons old.
    I roam through the seat of truth as a knowing one. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
15. Like two footprints set down within the wondrous one [=Agni? ritual ground?], the one of the two is hidden, the other visible [=Night and Dawn].
    Their pathway has a single goal, (but goes) separately. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
16. Let the milk-cows [=Dawns? plants crackling as they burn?] be noisy, those which are without young (yet) sap-yielding, unfailing, not milked out,
    becoming young ever anew. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
17. Though the bull goes about roaring within the one (herd of) cows, he deposits his seed in the other herd.
    For he is the earth-protector; he is the apportioner; he is king. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
18. The hero's abundance of horses we will proclaim just now, o people. The gods know of it.
    Yoked sixfold, five after five they convey (Indra) hither. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
19. God Tvaṣṭar, the impeller providing all forms, flourishes; he has begotten offspring in great quantity,
    and all these creatures here are his. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.

20. He [=Indra?] has raised up together the two great bowls (to be) united. Both of them are crammed with his goods.
    The hero is famed for finding goods. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
21. And he who suckles all of us [=Agni] dwells peacefully on this earth here, like a king with established alliances,
    stationed in front like heroes stationed for protection. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.
22. The plants and the waters offer tribute to you; the earth bears wealth for you, Indra.
    May we be your comrades, sharing in the valuables. – Great is the one and only lordship of the gods.

III.56 (290) All Gods

Prajāpati Vaiśvāmitra or Prajāpati Vācya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Another enigmatic and mystical All God hymn, with its mysteries, as so often, couched in numerological terms, primarily as threes or multiples of three. In the earlier parts of the hymn these numbers seem to refer to cosmic entities—perhaps, for example, the three heavens and three earths making up the six in verse 2—and to cosmic creation, though the details are far from clear. But the number three takes a strongly ritual turn beginning with verse 5, referring to three daily rites, that is, to the three pressings of the soma sacrifice. Thus the poet implicitly identifies ritual structure with cosmic structure.

1. Neither the tricky ones nor the clever transgress these: steadfast are the foremost commandments of the god.
   Neither the two world-halves without deceit nor the mountains standing fast are to be bowed down by knowing wiles.
2. Six burdens does the One, unmoving, bear. The cows have approached the highest truth.
   Three great females stand below, as steeds: two were deposited in hiding; one has become visible.
3. The bull of all forms [=Tvaṣṭar?] has three groins and three udders, with offspring in great quantity;
   having three faces, he is master [/husband], possessing great force. The bull is the inseminator of each and every female.
4. In a flash the trail-blazer for these (waters) has awakened—I have invoked the dear name of the Ādityas—
   Even the heavenly waters came to a stop for him. Proceeding in separate directions, they bent around him.

5. Three times three are the seats of the poets, o rivers, and the sovereign king at the rites [/in the (cosmic) divisions] [=Agni] has three mothers.
   Three are the truthful watery maidens, who act the master at the rite three times a day.
6. Three times a day, every day, o Savitar, impel valuables to us, three times daily.
   Threefold riches and goods impel here. O Bhaga, o Protector, o Holy Place, position (them) for winning.
7. Three times a day Savitar keeps impelling (and?) the two kings, Mitra and Varuṇa, of good hands.
   Even the waters, even the two broad world-halves beg for his treasure, for Savitar to impel it.
8. Threefold are the highest realms of light, difficult to reach; (there?) rule/shine three heroes of the Lord.
   Truthful, vigorous, difficult to deceive—three times a day let the gods be at the rite.

III.57 (291) All Gods

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn depicts the beginning of the morning ritual, with the recitation of praise poetry, the yoking of the pressing stones, and the kindling of the fire. The poet puts himself at the center of this activity, opening the hymn with a vivid image depicting his own inspiration as an untethered cow producing abundantly.

1. He who has sifted through has found my inspired thought—a milk-cow, roaming for some distance without a cowherd,
   who just in a single day has given milk in abundance from her wellspring. So Indra and Agni (and other gods) are admirers of her—
2. As are Indra and Pūṣan, the two bulls with dexterous hands. The (cows [=poems]), well treated, give unfailing milk like that of Heaven.
   When all the gods take pleasure in her, might I reach your benevolence there, o good ones.
3. The sisters who seek the potency of the bull [=Agni], they recognize their embryo in him and do homage.
   The milk-cows, bellowing, proceed powerfully toward their child who bears wondrous forms.
4. I invite the two well-fixed world-halves, as I yoke the pressing stones at the ceremony with my inspired thought.
   These (Dawns? flames?) of yours here, abounding in valuables for Manu, stand erect, visible and worthy of the sacrifice.

5. Your tongue, honeyed, very wise, wide spreading, which is proclaimed (even) among the gods, o Agni,
   with it make all those worthy of the sacrifice sit here for our help and make them drink the honeyed (drinks).
6. What of yours will swell inexhaustible and shimmering like the stream of a mountain, god Agni,
   that solicitude grant to us and your grace destined for all people, good Jātavedas.

III.58 (292) Aśvins

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins on a note of mystery, since the identities of the milk-cow, the "age-old (semen)," and the son of the priestly gift are unclear. The latter half of verse 1 describes the early morning, and therefore our view is that the first half does as well. We take the cow as the Dawn, whose milk is light, or possibly the hymn sung at dawn, and this milk arises from the semen (see III.31.10 for the ellipsis) that is the fire of Agni or the sun or, less likely, soma. Agni, the son of the dakṣiṇā, the priestly gift that may be actually or metaphorically a cow, is a "go-between," either as a messenger who encourages the morning or as one who goes between heaven and earth. Intricacy then replaces mystery in the second verse. In 2c, *asmát*, "because of us" or "from us," may be construed with "awaken" or perhaps secondarily with "away"—"We have put the poetic inspiration of the miser away (from us)." In 2d *cakr̥ma* "we have put" should be construed twice with two preverbs and, as Geldner has pointed out, *ā́* "here" can be construed with the two verbs it stands between.

The remainder of the hymn is neither as mysterious nor as intricate as these opening verses. It becomes a plea for the Aśvins to appear at the early-morning soma-pressing, riding in their chariot, which is the sound of the hymns that carry the Aśvins to the sacrificial site.

In verse 6 Jahnāvī probably refers to the "wife of Jahnu," who is the father or ancestor of Viśvāmitra according to the Brāhmaṇas, although others have taken it as the name of the clan of Jahnu (Geldner) or as a name of the Ganges (Pirart 2001: 91). If the former, perhaps the poet reminds the Aśvins of the wealth that was with his family in the past in his wish to renew this friendship with them and their support for him.

1. The milk-cow [=Dawn?] is yielding the desirable milk of the age-old (semen); the son [=Agni] of the priestly gift acts as go-between.
   She whose course is beautiful carries brightness here; the praise song of Dawn has awakened the Aśvins.

2. In good harness, the ritual offerings—they come to be high above!—
   carry you two like parents back here by the truth.
   Awaken because of us! We have put the poetic inspiration of the miser
   away (from us) and put here the help of you two. Travel here this way.
3. With your well-harnessed horses and smooth-rolling chariot, wondrous
   ones, hear this signal call of the pressing stone.
   Is it not true that the inspired poets born long ago have said that you are
   the first to respond to trouble, Aśvins?
4. Turn your thought here, come here somehow in your usual way—all
   peoples call upon the Aśvins—
   for like allies they [=the priests] have given this honey, foaming with cows
   [=milk], to you at the beginning of the reddening (dawn).
5. Even across many airy spaces, Aśvins, the song (travels) among the
   peoples, generous ones.
   Travel here along the paths leading to the gods. Wondrous ones, these
   stores of honey belong to you two.
6. Your home is old, your companionship benevolent, and yours the wealth
   at (the house of) the wife of Jahnu, you men.
   Creating once again your benevolent companionship for ourselves, now
   united together, we would find exhilaration through the honey.
7. O well-skilled Aśvins, youthful ones, together with the Wind and along
   with your teams,
   drink the day-old soma, taking pleasure and never faltering, o Nāsatyas
   who bring good gifts.
8. O Aśvins, ample refreshments have sped around you two, aligning
   themselves with the songs and never faltering.
   Your chariot, born of truth and hastened by pressing stones, travels
   around heaven and earth in a day.
9. O Aśvins, the soma that is yours, the best of honeyed pressings—drink it
   and come to our house!
   Your chariot, again and again creating many a beautiful form, is the first
   to come to the appointed place of the soma-offerer.

III.59 (293) Mitra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
9 verses: triṣṭubh 1–5, gāyatrī 6–9

Mitra is usually invoked along with Varuṇa; this is the only hymn in the R̥gveda to Mitra alone. Here he is addressed as the god of alliances who “organizes” the peoples (vss. 1, 5), that is, who oversees the agreements, treaties, marriages, and other forms of alliance by which people assume relationships with one another. Just as the human king must abide by and protect such relationships, so Mitra as a

divine king provides divine sanction for them. The first verse underscores the nature of Mitra and plays on the appellative sense of *mitrá* "alliance." It means both that the god of alliances arranges people when he is addressed and that an alliance arranges people when it is pronounced. This hymn marks the birth of an alliance, figured in verse 4 as the birth of Mitra himself at this time and in this place. The hymn does not say what kind of alliance has been born, but one possibility, suggested especially in the final two verses, is that it is the reciprocal alliance between gods and humans established through the sacrifice. In this alliance humans empower the gods through their praises and offerings, and the gods are expected to reciprocate by prospering humans.

This hymn has been the subject of a close study by Thieme (1957: 38–59).

1. Mitra arranges the peoples when (Alliance) is declared. Mitra upholds earth and heaven.
   Mitra watches over the nations with unblinking eye. To Mitra offer an offering of ghee.
2. He who strives according to your commandment, o Mitra—let that mortal, bringing pleasing offerings, be at the fore, o Āditya.
   Helped by you, he is not crushed, nor is he conquered. No distress reaches him from near nor from afar.
3. Free from disease, being invigorated through libation, with knees firm on the earth's expanse,
   abiding under the commandment of the Āditya, we would be in Mitra's good favor.
4. Here Mitra, to be revered and very kind, has been born as a king of excellent dominion and a ritual adept.
   We would be in the good favor of him, who is worthy of the sacrifice, and in his propitious benevolence.
5. The great Āditya is to be approached with reverence—he who arranges the peoples, who is very kind to the one singing praise.
   For him the most wonderful, for Mitra, offer this pleasing offering into the fire.
6. The help of the god Mitra, who maintains the separate territories, brings gain;
   his brilliance holds bright renown.
7. Wide-ranging Mitra, who surmounts heaven through his greatness
   and earth through his renown—
8. To Mitra with his power to dominate do the five peoples submit;
   he bears all the gods.
9. Among the gods and the Āyus, for the person who has plaited the ritual grass,
   Mitra has created refreshments that carry his desirable commandments.

III.60 (294) Ṛbhus and Indra

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
7 verses: jagatī

The hymn announces that the present priests have recovered the skills of the Ṛbhus by which, although born as human "children of Manu" (vs. 3), they attained divinity (vs. 2), immortality (vs. 3), and, like the gods, a share of the sacrifice (vs. 1). The "form" that the Ṛbhus adopt in verse 1 may be the divine form they have earned. In verses 4–6 the poet turns to Indra and asks him to come to the soma-pressing along with the Ṛbhus, now fully divine, and to drink the soma in the company of the Ṛbhus. Because Indra and the Ṛbhus are traveling by chariot, the poet deploys the imagery of prizewinning racehorses throughout these last verses. He even calls the Ṛbhus themselves "prizewinners" in verse 7, though this metaphor is anticipated by *vā́javant* in verses 5 and 6. "Vāja" is the name of one of the Ṛbhus, so on one level this means that Vāja is in the company of the other Ṛbhus, but it also means that the Ṛbhus, since they ride in Indra's chariot, are or will be accompanied by the prize of victory.

1. In one place and another, by their thought and family relationship, by
 their knowledge, o men, the fire-priests have arrived at these things:
 the craft by which, o sons of Sudhanvan, you have attained a sacrificial
 share, rapidly adopting a (different) form;
2. The ability by which you carved the cups; the insight by which you made
 the cow to flow (milk) from the hide;
 the thought by which you fashioned the two fallow bays—by (all) that, o
 Ṛbhus, you fully attained divinity.
3. The Ṛbhus attained the companionship of Indra. The artisans, the
 children of Manu, raced.
 The sons of Sudhanvan rose to immortality by applying themselves to
 their labors, ritually acting well by good ritual action.
4. You travel on the same chariot with Indra when the soma is pressed, and
 then you become joined with the splendor of your wishes.
 Your good ritual acts are not to be equaled, o chanters, sons of
 Sudhanvan, Ṛbhus, nor your heroic deeds.
5. O Indra, together with the Ṛbhus bringing the Prize of Victory [=Vāja],
 drench yourself in the soma pressed and sprinkled in the hands (of the
 priests).
 Urged on by insight, o generous one, become exhilarated in the
 house of the pious one together with the sons of Sudhanvan, those
 superior men.
6. O Indra, along with the Ṛbhus bringing the Prize of Victory [=Vāja],
 become exhilarated here at this soma-pressing of ours, along with
 your ability, o much-praised one.

These pastures [=soma rites?] have offered themselves to you according to the commandment of the gods and the (ritual) foundations of Manu.

7. O Indra, together with the Ṛbhus, with the prizewinners, racing to the prize, travel here to the ritually right praise of the singer
with your hundred invigorating intentions for Āyu, since you have a thousand stratagems at the rite's invocation.

III.61 (295) Dawn

Viśvāmitra Gāthina
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The only hymn dedicated to Dawn in Maṇḍala III, it combines the usual themes: the beauty of the young goddess, her relation to the morning ritual and the ritual fire, and her role as giver of rich goods because of the distribution of priestly gifts at the Morning Pressing. Note that halfway through the hymn (beginning with vs. 4), the direct 2nd-person address to Dawn changes to 3rd-person description. This change may mirror the development of the ritual: first the poet coaxes Dawn to appear, and when his pleas have been successful (the vocatives of the first verses are in part replaced by aorists and perfects of the immediate past), he turns his attention to the ritual her appearance has set in motion.

1. O Dawn, prize-giver with a rich prize, bounteous—as a discerning one enjoy the praise of the singer.
O goddess, as a young woman from of old, as Plenitude you proceed according to your commandment, you who bring all valuables.
2. O goddess Dawn, as immortal one radiate widely, possessing a gleaming chariot, arousing liberalities.
Let your horses, easy to control, convey you hither—you of golden color, they who have broad flanks.
3. O Dawn, facing all beings, you stand erect as the beacon of the immortal one.
As you make your progress to the same goal (as the older dawns), roll yourself hither like a wheel, you newer one.
4. Like one letting the reins go slack [?], bounteous Dawn drives, mistress of good pasture.
Generating the sun, she of good portion and wondrous power stretches all the way to the end of heaven and of earth.
5. To the goddess Dawn, radiating widely, proffer your well-twisted (hymn) with reverence.
The honey-bringer has propped her leading edge upward in heaven. She of delightful aspect has shone forth through the shining realms.

6. The truthful (daughter) of Heaven has been awakened by our chants [/been perceived with her rays]. The wealthy lady has brightly mounted the two world-halves.
   Agni, you go begging Dawn for valuable property as she comes hither, radiating widely.
7. Driving (the cows) of the Dawns on the foundation of truth, the bull [=Sun?] has entered the two great world-halves.
   Great is the magic power of Mitra and Varuṇa. As the shimmering (Dawn) has spread her radiance, it [=magic power] is spread widely in many places.

III.62 (296) Various Gods

Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–15); Viśvāmitra or Jamadagni (16–18)
18 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, gāyatrī 4–18, arranged in tr̥cas

This, the last hymn in the maṇḍala, consists of eighteen verses, which should put it out of sequence. However, it falls naturally into tr̥cas, and probably originally consisted of six three-verse hymns dedicated severally to Indra and Varuṇa (1–3), Br̥haspati (4–6), Pūṣan (7–9), Savitar (10–12), Soma (13–15), and Mitra and Varuṇa (16–18).

In general the tr̥cas are relatively straightforward, even banal, but the first verse of the first tr̥ca is rhetorically dense and striking in imagery. It seems to suggest that our hymns, though they appear to be frenetically active, have lost their effectiveness, and therefore Indra and Varuṇa have ceased to act on behalf of their humans praisers and worshipers. It may not be entirely fanciful to conjecture that the simple, even simplistic, style of the remaining tr̥cas is an attempt to replace the "whirlwinds" of verbal art (of which there is much in Maṇḍala III) with a meeker and less ostentatious style.

The most notable feature of this hymn is the fact that the first verse of the fourth tr̥ca, dedicated to Savitar (vs. 10), is the famous "Gāyatrī mantra," with which orthodox Hindus begin their morning worship even today. In the context of R̥gvedic poetry, it must be said that the contents and form of this verse are not particularly striking. As was just suggested, this may in fact be its point.

1. These (hymns) here for you two, (though) they are considered whirlwinds, have become ones that cannot be (successfully) brandished (even?) by one devoted to you two.
   Where is this glory of yours, Indra and Varuṇa, with which you are wont to carry the gear for your comrades?
2. This (man) here, latest of many, seeking wealth, keeps calling on you two time after time for help.
   Indra and Varuṇa, in concert with the Maruts, with Heaven and with Earth, listen to my call.

3. May there be goods for us, o Indra and Varuṇa; wealth in hale heroes for us, o Maruts.
   Let the Shielding Goddesses aid us with their shelters; (let) Hotrā Bhāratī (help) us with her priestly gifts.

4. Bṛhaspati belonging to the All Gods, enjoy our oblations.
   Grant treasures to the pious man.
5. To blazing Bṛhaspati give reverence with recitations at the ceremonies—
   his unbowed power I desire—
6. To the bull of the settled domains, having all forms, undeceivable,
   Bṛhaspati worthy to be chosen.

7. Here is a lovely praise hymn, utterly new, for you, Pūṣan, glowing god.
   It is recited by us to you.
8. Enjoy this hymn of mine—help our insight that seeks the prize—
   like a bride-seeking (man) a maiden.
9. He who looks at all creatures separately and sees them whole,
   that one, Pūṣan will become our helper.

10. Might we make our own that desirable effulgence of god Savitar,
    who will rouse forth our insights.
11. Seeking the prize, we beg for the generosity of Bhaga,
    along with the plenitude of god Savitar.
12. To god Savitar do the men, the inspired poets, give reverence with sacrifices and well-twisted hymns,
    when impelled by insight.

13. Soma proceeds, finding the way; he goes to a rendezvous with the gods,
    to sit in the womb of truth.
14. Soma—for us, for the two-footed, and for the four-footed livestock,
    he will make refreshments that bring no disease.
15. Increasing our lifetime, overcoming hostilities,
    Soma has sat on the seat.

16. Mitra and Varuṇa, sprinkle our pastureland with ghee,
    the realms with honey, you of good resolve.
17. Widely proclaimed, increasing through reverence, you rule by the greatness of your skill
    through the longest (spaces? times?), you of blazing commandments.
18. Being hymned by Jamadagni, sit in the womb of truth.
    Drink the soma, you two increasing through truth.

IV

Maṇḍala IV

The IVth Maṇḍala is the product of the Vāmadeva family, with almost all of its fifty-eight hymns attributed to the eponymous clan poet himself, Vāmadeva (Gautama). The numbers of Agni and Indra hymns are roughly equivalent (Agni 1–15; Indra 16–32), but the Indra hymns are the more striking, and Indra is really the dominant god of the maṇḍala. The Indra sequence contains both the famous treatment of Indra's birth (IV.18), with dialogue between him and his mother while he is still in the womb, and the almost equally famous hymn pair (IV.26–27) treating the theft of soma from heaven—along with hymns lacking fame but repaying attention like IV.16 and 24. The important dialogue between Indra and Varuṇa (IV.42) is also found in this maṇḍala, and Indra is addressed jointly with Varuṇa also in IV.41, with Vāyu in 46–47, and with Bṛhaspati in 49–50.

Moreover, a particular preoccupation in the Agni hymns is the Vala myth, which is more properly an Indra (/Bṛhaspati) narrative. Especially noteworthy in the Agni cycle is IV.5, an enigmatic hymn meditating on the craft of poetry.

Maṇḍala IV also contains a sequence of five hymns dedicated to the Ṛbhus (33–37), the most sustained treatment of these gods in the Ṛgveda and fundamental to our understanding of their ritual and mythological nature. Other minor gods are recessive in the maṇḍala, however.

The transcendent racehorse Dadhikrā is the recipient of three hymns (38–40). The final two hymns, 57 and 58, are unique in the Ṛgveda. The first is dedicated to agricultural gods, a striking departure for a text that focuses on stock-breeding and barely mentions agriculture, and the second celebrates the ritual substance ghee (melted butter), a material offering fundamental to the ritual but meriting only one hymn in the Ṛgveda, as opposed to the many allotted to its parallel substance soma.

IV.1 (297) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
20 verses: triṣṭubh, except aṣṭi 1, atijagatī 2, dhṛti 3

This long and complex hymn contains an important account of the Vala myth: the opening of the cave containing the imprisoned cows and their release. Although the

hero of this myth is, of course, ordinarily Indra, he does not appear in the hymn, even in disguised fashion. Instead, the troop that usually aids him in this exploit, the Aṅgirases, receive all the credit, though they are not mentioned by name. The absence of Indra can presumably be ascribed to the fact that this is a hymn to Agni; the larger question is why the Vala myth is appropriate to an Agni hymn. Here the answer must be the connection of both gods with the dawn: the ruddy Vala cows are regularly identified as the dawns, and the ritual fire is kindled at dawn. Indeed the Vala myth in this hymn is introduced by a reference to Agni's primordial birth (vs. 11), and the (unnamed) Aṅgirases are identified as his begetters (vs. 12): perhaps they free the embryonic Agni enclosed "in the nest of the bull" (vss. 11–12) as they do the Vala cows. We have seen the connection between the birth of the ritual fire and the Vala myth elsewhere, for example, in III.31, an Indra hymn, where it was also mediated by dawn.

The Vala myth is embedded within verses more conventionally devoted to Agni. The first five verses address Agni directly. He is first reminded of his original installation by the gods and their purpose in so doing (vs. 1), and in the next four verses Agni is urged to use his closeness to Varuṇa in order to intercede for us mortals with that god. The next four verses praise Agni in the 3rd person, concentrating on his present state. Verses 10–12 form the transition to the Vala myth; in fact verse 10 might seem to go naturally with 6–9, but, with its reference to the treasure of the gods, it forms a ring with verse 18, which closes the Vala section. The heart of the Vala narrative consists of verses 13–17. The final two verses (19–20) provide a summarizing praise of Agni.

1. You, o Agni, the god, did the gods of equal fervor install for always as
   the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice)—
   with such a purpose did they install you:
   [Gods addressing mortals:] "Sacrifice to the immortal [=Agni] among
   the mortals; beget the god god-directed and discerning;
   beget each one [=every new fire] as god-directed and discerning."
2. Agni, turn here to your brother Varuṇa, to the gods with your favor—to
   him who yearns for sacrifice,
   your oldest (brother) who yearns for sacrifice,
   the truthful son of Aditi who supports the settled domains, the king who
   supports the settled domains.
3. O comrade, turn to your comrade, like a wheel to a swift (horse), like
   chariotry at speed,
   for us, o wondrous one, at speed.
   Agni, you (will) find grace in company with Varuṇa, with the all-radiant
   Maruts.
   To press out progeny, o blazing one, make luck; for us, wondrous one,
   make luck.
4. You, Agni, knowing one—for us may you please placate through prayer
   the anger of god Varuṇa.

As best sacrificer, best conveyor (of oblations), constantly blazing, release all hatreds from us.

5. You, Agni, come down close to us with your help; be nearest to us at the breaking of this dawn.
   Through sacrifice placate Varuṇa for us, as you give to us. Pursue his grace; be easy for us to invoke.
6. Of this well-portioned god here his manifestation is the fairest, the most brilliant one among mortals.
   Gleaming like the heated ghee of the inviolable (cow), (the manifestation) of the god is eagerly sought like the largesse of a milk-cow.
7. Three times do these highest births of his come into existence—the eagerly sought births of the god Agni.
   Enveloped within the limitless, he has come here—a blazing flame, ever shining for the stranger.
8. As messenger he strives toward all seats, the Hotar whose chariot is golden, whose tongue is amid the pleasures [=oblations],
   whose horses are ruddy, he wondrous, far-radiant, always pleasurable like a banquet abounding in food.
9. He makes men perceive [=instructs them], as their tie to the sacrifice of Manu; they lead him forth with a great halter.
   He dwells peacefully in his houses, assuring success; the god attains the fellowship of the mortal.
10. Let Agni, knowing (the way), lead us to the treasure, which was apportioned to him by the gods.
    (The treasure) which all the immortals created with their insight, which Father Heaven as begetter (created)—(that) they sprinkled (so it became) real.
11. He was born first in the dwelling places, at the base of this great realm, as his womb,
    footless, headless, concealing his two ends, continually retracting (his limbs [=flames]), in the nest of the bull.
12. The troop [=Aṅgirases] set forth first amid admiration to the womb of truth, to the nest of the bull—
    The eagerly sought youth, wondrous, far-radiant [=Agni]—the seven dear ones [=Aṅgirases or their music] begat (him) for the bull.
13. Our forefathers here, belonging to Manu, stationed themselves in front, panting over the truth.
    They [=the forefathers/Aṅgirases] drove up those with a rock as their pen, the good milkers within the cave, the ruddy dawns being called to.
14. They [=the forefathers/Aṅgirases] cleaned themselves, after having split the stone. This (deed) of theirs the others proclaimed all about.

Lacking ropes to hold the livestock, they sang the decisive act: "They found the light! They sought it with their insightful thoughts!"

15. Those with their mind set on cattle (opened up) the solid, knotted-up, enclosing stone that held the cows.
    The firmly fixed pen full of cows did the men, the fire-priests, open up with divine speech.
16. They brought to mind the first name of the milk-cow; thrice seven highest (names) of the mother they found.
    (The cows) recognizing it [=the name], bellowed out (to the men), (like) maidens (announcing their bridegroom choice). The ruddy one [=Dawn] became manifest with the glorious (name) of the cow.
17. The bilious darkness disappeared; heaven lightened; the radiance of the goddess Dawn arose.
    The Sun mounted the lofty fields, looking upon the straight and the crooked among mortals.
18. And then afterward having awakened they looked about; and then they held up the treasure apportioned by heaven—
    all the gods (did so) in all the houses. O Mitra, Varuṇa—let it [=treasure] come into existence (also) for our insightful thought.
19. I would call here blazing Agni as Hotar, the best sacrificer who carries all burdens.
    He drilled, seemingly, the gleaming udder of the cows, which was purified like the stalk of the plant poured in circles [=soma].
20. As the Aditi of all those worthy of the sacrifice [=gods], the guest of all the sons of Manu [=men],
    let Agni Jātavedas, choosing the aid of the gods, become very gracious.

IV.2 (298) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
20 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn shares a number of features, including phraseology, with the previous one: like IV.1 it begins with the installation of Agni as the mediator of the sacrificial exchange between men and gods, and it contains a brief, Indra-less account of the Vala myth (vss. 15–17), with the Aṅgirases explicitly compared to the poets of today besieging the treasure-holding pen of the sacrifice. However, the first few verses of the hymn (vss. 2–4) enlarge on Agni's role as messenger announced in verse 1. The hymn also contains an elaborate treatment (vss. 6–10, 13–14) of the various ritual services rendered to Agni by the sacrificers, and Agni is urged to distinguish between those who do such service and other mortals (esp. vss. 11–12). The final two verses (19–20) summarize the fire-worship that has just been performed

by the sacrificers, both actions ("we have performed," vs. 19) and words ("we have spoken," vs. 20), a common hymn-ending device. Preceding them is a mysterious verse (18), whose position suggests that it closes the Vala myth, but whose content seems at least superficially unconnected.

1. He who has been installed as the immortal among the mortals, the god among the gods, the truthful one, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice),
   Hotar, best sacrificer—to blaze with his greatness, to be roused by the oblations of Manu: Agni.
2. O son of strength, o Agni, created here for us today, between both created (peoples [=men and gods])
   you shuttle as messenger, o high one, having yoked your (horses) with their testicles stretched out (behind from speed), (the horses) bullish and blazing.
3. The two chestnut steeds of truth, strong(-backed), ghee-backed, I consider to be swiftest (even in comparison) with mind.
   Yoking these two ruddy ones, you shuttle between (all of) you gods and the clans here, the mortals.
4. Among those (gods), convey Aryaman, Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra and Viṣṇu, the Maruts, and the Aśvins
   just here, to the person providing good oblations, o Agni—you who have good horses, good chariot, good rewards.
5. O Agni, a sacrifice bringing cows, sheep, horses, and manly comrades is never to be spurned.
   Bringing refreshment and progeny, o Lord, it is long wealth, broad of base, fit for the assembly.
6. Whoever will bear fuel to you though sweating, or will scorch his head in serving you,
   for him you will become a self-powerful protector, Agni. Make for him wide protection from everyone who bears malice.
7. Whoever will bring food to you just as you seek food, will whet (you) down, will raise (you) up as the gladdening guest,
   will, seeking the gods, kindle (you) here in his dwelling—in him let wealth, rich in gifts, be steadfast.
8. Whoever at evening, whoever at dawn will celebrate you, or offering an oblation will make you a dear (friend)
   in his own house—like a horse with much spurring you will carry that pious man out of narrow straits.
9. Whoever will perform pious service for you, Agni, the immortal one, whoever, with his offering ladle raised, will offer friendly service to you,
   that one, having labored to exhaustion, will not stay distant from wealth, nor will the narrow straits of the malicious enclose him.

10. Whose ceremony you will enjoy, Agni—a god enjoying the well-positioned ceremony of a mortal, while you give—
just his ritual offering will be pleasing, o youngest one—(the man) whose strengtheners we will be when he does (you) honor.
11. Insight and lack of insight will the knowing one [=Agni] distinguish, like backs, straight and crooked, (like) mortals.
And for the sake of wealth and good descendants for us, o god, both grant Diti [/Giving] and make wide space for Aditi [/Boundlessness].
12. The poet [=Agni] have the undeceivable poets instructed, fixing him down fast in the houses of Āyu.
From there, Agni, you should look with your eyes upon those who are easily seen and upon the unerring ones (who go) along the ways of the stranger.
13. You, Agni, offering good guidance, to the cantor, to the one with pressed soma who does honor, o youngest one,
bring a treasure, broad and gleaming—to the one who labors to exhaustion, to help him, o excitable one, you who fill the settled domains.
14. Then while we [=sacrificing priests] have acted, with feet, with hands, with bodies, in serving you, Agni,
like those making a chariot with the work of (our/their) two arms, those of good insight [=poets] have held fast to the truth, panting over it.
15. Then as the seven inspired poets might we be born from mother Dawn, as the foremost ritual adepts for men.
Might we become sons of heaven, Aṅgirases. Might we break the rock that holds the prize, as we blaze.
16. Then like our further forefathers of old, panting over the truth, o Agni,
those reciting solemn speech (now) will come to the blazing (udder of sacrifice [=Vala]), to visionary power. Splitting (heaven and) earth, they (will) unclose the ruddy (cows [=dawns]).
17. Those of good work and good light, seeking the gods, smelting the races of the gods like metal,
they went blazing, strengthening Agni and Indra, besieging the cattle pen.
18. He [=Agni?] watched over them like (a herdsman) the herds of livestock in a cattle-rich (pasture)—watched over the race of gods that was nearby, o strong one.
The Urvaśīs yearned also for (the race of) men, also for the increase of the stranger, of Āyu to come.
19. We have acted for you; we have been good workers—(as) the radiant dawns have clothed themselves in truth—
we always grooming in many ways unfailing Agni, beautifully gleaming, the dear eye of the god.

20. These solemn speeches have we spoken to you the poet, o Agni, you ritual adept: enjoy them.
    Blaze up; make us better off. Extend to us great riches, o you of many favors.

IV.3 (299) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
16 verses: triṣṭubh

In the very last verse of this hymn (16) the poet announces that he has produced counsels, enigmas, secret words, and poetry for Agni: these verbal products presumably make up the rest of the hymn. It begins fairly straightforwardly, however, with a treatment (vss. 1–3) of the kindling of the ritual fire, as so often at the beginning of Agni hymns. But starting with verse 4 a certain worried tone becomes apparent, about the relationship between the poet and the god Agni. The next four verses (5–8) contain anxious questions: what is Agni planning to say to various gods about us? These questions reflect the uncertainty produced by the ritual model: Agni is the ritual mediator between men and gods, and so in some sense everything the gods learn about us mortals is filtered through Agni, who may be—we worry—an unreliable witness. The anxiety returns in verses 13–14, especially the former, in which the poet worries that Agni will punish him for the deeds of his relatives and acquaintances. In between (vss. 9–12) are four verses, each beginning with the charged word *ṛténa* "by truth," introducing a mixture of ritual and mythic activities, including one verse (11) on the Vala myth, a preoccupation of the Agni hymns in IV.

What ties the various parts of the hymn together is not entirely clear, and it may be that the poet's final verse, listing several types of verbal material, is meant to indicate that the hymn consists of a disparate collection of his works, although attempting to assign those labels to the different parts of the hymn would probably be taking the conceit too far.

1. Make [=ignite] him here, the king, the Rudra of your ceremony, the Hotar whose sacrifice comes true in the two world-halves,
   Agni of golden form—(make him) for help for you in the face of unexpected thundering.
2. Here is the womb that we made for you. (It is/You are) like an eager wife, richly dressed, for her husband.
   Enveloped, sit down facing our way: here are (hymns) facing you, o very knowing one.
3. To him [=Agni] who listens undistracted to the thought, to the one drawing the gaze of men, the very gracious one—o ritual adept—
   to the god, the immortal, chant the chant, the god whom the (human) presser invokes like the honey-pressing pressing stone.

4. Agni, at least become aware of this (ritual) labor of ours, of (our expression of) truth, o perceiver of truth, as one who is very concerned.
   When will our solemn words become your feasting companions? When will your fellowship (come to) be in our house?
5. How will you complain about this to Varuṇa, o Agni, how to Heaven? What is our offense?
   How will you speak to Mitra the rewarder, to Earth? What to Aryaman, to Fortune?
6. What (will you say), Agni, having grown strong on the holy places [=ritual hearths], what to the Wind projecting strength, charging to beauty,
   (what) to the earth-circling (chariot) of the Nāsatyas, for it to appear? What will you say, Agni, to man-smiting Rudra?
7. How (will you speak) to great Pūṣan who brings prosperity, what to Rudra, the good combatant [/very generous], for him to give the oblation,
   what to wide-striding Viṣṇu, (for him to give) semen? What will you say, Agni, to (Rudra's) lofty arrow?
8. How (will you speak) to the troop of Maruts, for truth? How to the lofty Sun? When you are asked,
   (how) will you answer to Aditi, to powerful (Indra?)? Send (our thought) to its goal, all the way to heaven—(you are) the observant one, o Jātavedas.
9. With truth I reverently invoke the (mystical) truth set down [=acquired] from the cow: the raw one [=cow] and the cooked, honeyed (milk) belong together, Agni.
   Though she is black, she is swollen with the gleaming gush, with milk for nourishing offspring.
10. Because by truth even the bull, the male Agni, was anointed with the milk on the top [=cream, that is, butter],
    not bucking, he went about conferring vigor: the bull as Pr̥śni milked gleaming (milk/semen) from his udder.
11. By truth they threw open the rock, having split it. The Aṅgirases roared along with the cows.
    For blessing the men besieged the dawn; the sun became visible when the fire was born.
12. By truth the immortal, unharmable goddesses, the waters with their honeyed floods, o Agni—
    like a competitor beating a tattoo at the start(ing posts)—should set to running, to stream forever.
13. Don't ever chase after (us, as) the specter of a nobody, a crooked man—neither of a tricky neighbor, nor of a friend.

Do not pursue the debt of a dishonest brother (against us), Agni. May we not pay for the "skill" of a cheating partner.

14. Guard us, Agni, with your guards, ever guarding when you are gratified, you good combatant [/very generous].
    Spring toward rigid constraint and break it apart; smash demonic force, even though it has grown great.
15. By reason of these recitations become well disposed, Agni; by reason of our thoughts caress these prizes, o champion.
    And enjoy the sacred formulations, Aṅgiras. May the chant favored by the gods bring harmony to you.
16. All these devices, the secret words, are for you who know, o ritual adept, Agni—
    the enigmas, the poetic compositions are for you, the wise poet. I, the inspired one, have pronounced them in composed thoughts and solemn speeches.

IV.4 (300) Agni the Demon-Smasher

Vāmadeva Gautama
15 verses: triṣṭubh

The Anukramaṇī names Agni Demon-Smasher (*Rakṣo-han*) as the divinity of this hymn. This ascription is certainly apt for the first five verses with their vividly hostile imagery, but starting with verse 6 the benefits that accrue to those who properly worship Agni are described (vss. 6–10). We identify ourselves as those worshipers in verses 8–9, and in verse 11 (see also vs. 8) the poet boasts of his hereditary poetic gifts, which enable him to get the attention and good favor of Agni. He explicitly identifies the source of his poetic skill as his father Gotama, but implicitly, through his phraseology, he also identifies himself with the Aṅgirases, the legendary poets who broke open the treasure cave of Vala, a myth that is much on the mind of the poet of these Agni hymns in IV (see, e.g., IV.1.13–17; 2.15–17; 3.11). The remaining verses (12–15) call on Agni to protect us with his protectors (presumably his flames) and to grant other blessings. The demons return in the last half verse (15cd).

1. Make your leading edge like a broad onslaught. Drive like an aggressive king with his entourage,
   mowing down (enemies) along your thirsting onslaught. You are an archer: pierce the demons with your hottest (flames).
2. Your swirling (flames) fly swiftly; touch down boldly following (them [/your onslaught]) as you keep blazing.
   Unfettered, o Agni, with your tongue hurl out bursts of heat, flying (embers), firebrands in all directions.

3. Hurl out your spies against (the foes), as the swiftest one. Become the undeceivable protector of this clan here.
   Whoever curses us at a distance, who nearby, o Agni, let no one defy your veering course.
4. Stand up, Agni; stretch yourself out [/stretch (your bow)] against (them). Then scorch down the foes, o you whose missiles are sharp.
   Whoever has directed hostility toward us, o kindled one, burn him down like a dry thicket.
5. Become upright; pierce against (them)—away from us. Make your heavenly (forms?) manifest, Agni.
   Slacken the taut (bows) of those incited by sorcerers; kin or non-kin, pulverize the rivals.
6. That one knows your good will, o youngest one, who has set the course for a sacred formulation like this.
   For him you have flashed open the doors to all the day-bright (days), to the riches, to the brilliant things of the stranger.
7. Agni, let just him be rich in portions, rich in gifts, who with regular oblation, who with solemn words
   seeks to please you during his own lifetime, in his own dwelling. All (days) (will be) day-bright for him. This desire (of his) will come true.
8. I recite a good thought to you [/recite (=praise) your good will]. Hear it, inclined our way. (Like) a "Favorite" wife, let this song bring harmony to you.
   We who have good horses and good chariots would groom you. In us you should uphold lordly powers through the days.
9. Here should (a man) attend on you much in person—you illuminator of the evening, shining through the days.
   Playful and well disposed, we would serve you, we who have surmounted the brilliant things of (other) men.
10. Whoever, rich in horses and gold, drives up to you, Agni, with a chariot full of goods,
    his protector do you become and the (ritual) partner of him who will regularly enjoy your guest-friendship.
11. Thanks to my lineage, I powerfully break (it [=the rock full of treasures]) with my speeches. This [=speech/poetic gift?] has come down to me from my father Gotama.
    Take note of this speech of ours here, o Hotar, youngest one, very effective, as friend of the house.
12. These—sleepless, (ever) advancing, very friendly, tireless, never wearying, keeping the wolf away—
    these protectors of yours, directed to a single goal—let them settle down and protect us, o ungullible Agni.

13. Agni, your protectors who, watching, guarded blind Māmateya [=Dīrghatamas] from ill-faring,
    those of good (ritual) action has the possessor [/knower] of everything [=Agni] guarded. Though wishing to damage, the cheats did no damage at all.
14. Through you may we—companions aided by you, in your guidance—attain prizes.
    Sweeten both of the lauds [=for both the gods and the patrons], you who are reality itself. Set them in order, you unabashed one.
15. With this kindling stick we would do honor to you, Agni. Accept the praise being chanted.
    Burn the demons who lack chant; protect us from deceit, from scorn, from calumny, o you with Mitra's might.

IV.5 (301) Agni Belonging to All Men [Agni Vaiśvānara]

Vāmadeva Gautama
15 verses: triṣṭubh

A very difficult and enigmatic hymn: this is not surprising because its subject seems to be poetic speech, its hidden meanings and its mysterious sources, so that the form of the hymn replicates its theme. The signature word is *padám*, which occurs six times in the hymn (vss. 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12); it is a significant pun, meaning both "track/footstep" and "word," and in the full phrase "hidden track of the cow" (*padám… gór ápagūḷham*, vs. 3) it refers to the arduous pursuit of cryptic meaning by way of verbal art. As often when Rgvedic poets reflect on their craft, this poet wonders about the source of his own poetic inspiration and worries about the skills of other poets. Although some scholars consider this hymn to reflect a poetic contest, we do not see a formal contest here, but simply the usual anxiety about poetic rivals. This poet identifies the source of his poetic gift as the god Agni (vss. 2–3, also 12), who bestowed this vision on him, though he was just a simple man (vss. 2, 6). He puzzles over the fact that thoroughly evil men can nonetheless also have the gift of poetry (vss. 4–5), but decides that because he (the poet) is morally uncompromised, Agni will shoulder the extra burden of bringing his (the poet's) poetic vision to success (vs. 6). When he returns to the rival poets in verse 14, he is full of scorn for their talent: the patronage of Agni has clearly spelled the difference for our poet.

The exact middle of the hymn (vss. 7–8, esp. 7cd) is an omphalos, which displays in daunting fashion the control the poet has gained, thanks to Agni, over the encrypted mysteries of the sacrifice and its verbal expression. Verse 7 ends with the impossible hapax *jábāru*. There have been various attempts to interpret and etymologize this word, beginning with Yāska, but in our opinion this is beside the point: the word is a sort of abracadabra, a mystical expression, and the half verse

in which it appears encapsulates the profound and transformative secret of the sacrifice. This secret is under the protection of Agni in verse 8, but the poet has learned at least some of it.

The following two verses (9–10) reflect on the dawn ritual and the kindling of the sacrificial fire then, though the mysteries are rather easier to penetrate than those in the omphalos verses. The poet then expresses hope for gifts from Agni in exchange for his own formulation of the truth (vs. 11) and asks somewhat nervous questions about how and whether he will gain these gifts (vss. 12–13). As already noted, verse 14 heaps scorn on rival poets with fewer verbal skills. The final verse is conventional praise of Agni, expressed in the aorist of the immediate past, indicating that the morning ritual and the hymn have come to an end.

Another Vaiśvānara hymn, VI.9, follows much the same trajectory as this one, with similar reflections on the craft of poetry and the inspiration received from Agni.

1. How might we, in concert, do service to Vaiśvānara, to Agni who gives rewards; how might we serve his lofty light?
   With his unfailing lofty growth he propped (heaven) like a post a bulwark.
2. Do not spurn (him), the self-empowered god who gave this bounty to me, a mortal,
   a simple man—he shrewd, discriminating, the immortal Vaiśvānara, most manly, youthfully exuberant Agni.
3. A great melody (he gave)—the doubly lofty, sharp-pointed, thousand-spurting, powerful bull—
   having found the word hidden like the track of the cow. Agni has proclaimed the inspired thought to me.
4. Agni, the sharp-fanged, will snap at them with his hottest flame—he who (also) grants good rewards—
   at them who violate the ordinances of Varuṇa, the enduring ordinances dear to Mitra who attends to them.
5. (You) pursuing (it [=the hidden word/track]) like brotherless maidens pursuing (men), (you) of evil ways like wives cheating (on?) their husbands,
   though being wicked, untruthful, untrue, you [=other singers] begot this deep track [/profound word].
6. (But) this (track/word) is mine, o pure Agni! Since I, however small, do not violate (the ordinances), for me you have boldly placed the thought, like a heavy burden,
   lofty and deep, on your own youthfully exuberant, sevenfold "back" along with the pleasurable offering.
7. May my hymnic vision, purifying through its conception, reach just to him [=Agni?] now, to the same one in the same way (as always [at the ritual]).
   On the hide of the grain [=ritual grass?] is the lovely (udder/name) of Pr̥śni [=sacrifice]; on the tip of the mount has (the mystical expression? the milk?) "jabāru" (also? been) mounted.

8. What (part) of this speech is to be proclaimed to me? They confide privately what was deposited in secret [=the track/word]—
   that they have uncovered it like the "water" of the ruddy (cows). He [=Agni] protects the dear tip of the mount, the track of the bird.
9. Here is this great face of the great ones [=Sun], which the ruddy cow [=Dawn] followed (as it went) in front.
   She [?] found it shining hidden in the track of truth, going quickly, quick-streaming.
10. Then having flashed with his mouth, in company with his parents [=kindling sticks], he [=Agni] pondered the hidden, dear (udder/name) of Pr̥śni,
    (the udder/name) which is in the furthest track/footstep of the mother cow, though (also just) nearby—(Agni having flashed) with the tongue of his bullish, extended flame.
11. I have proclaimed the truth with reverence, on being asked, with hope of you [=your bounty], Jātavedas, if it [=the truth] is here.
    You hold sway over this, all of it—whatever wealth is in heaven and what on the earth.
12. Is some of this wealth for us? What is the treasure? As the perceptive one, Jātavedas, you have announced to us
    in secret the highest (track/footstep) of this (ritual) road of ours, on which we have gone, like the spurned going on an empty track.
13. What is the (finish) line, (what) the trajectories, what the desired (wealth)? Might we go to it, like quick (horses) to a prize.
    When will the goddesses, the wives of the immortal one, the Dawns stretch toward us with the color of the sun?
14. Those who fail to satisfy with their insipid, meager, stunted speech, easy to attack—
    what then do they say here, Agni? Without weapons, let them be accompanied by (speech) that does not come true.
15. Of him, being kindled for beauty, the bull, the good one—his face shines here in the house.
    Gleamingly clad, with a form lovely to see, he of many favors has flashed like a dwelling (flashing) with wealth.

IV.6 (302) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is not at the same level of complexity as the previous Agni hymns in Maṇḍala IV; it does, however, contain some difficult hapaxes (see vss. 7, 8, 10) in

its second half. The hymn in quite ritually focused, particularly in its first half (vss. 1–5). The mention of the post (vs. 3) and Agni's circumambulation (vss. 3–5) identifies the ritual in question in these verses, an animal sacrifice: as we know from later detailed accounts of the ritual, the animals were tethered to the post before sacrifice, and fire was carried around them. See III.8, dedicated to the sacrificial post.

The subject of the second half is less clear, the ritual references both less precise and more poetically enigmatic. It is perhaps simply the kindling of fire at dawn, as so often, with striking and shifting descriptions of its birth and of its resulting flames. The most difficult part of the hymn is the first half of verse 7, and its translation here is speculative.

Although the hymn seems to fall into two halves, there is no reason to suppose that it is not a unitary composition. The exact ritual references of the first part simply open out to a general treatment of the ritual fire, by way of a transition (vss. 5–6) mentioning the fearsome aspects of Agni, perhaps suggested by the association with animal sacrifice.

1. Stand upright, o Agni, Hotar of the ceremony, as superior sacrificer for us at the divine assemblage.
   Since you dominate every thought, you further the inspiration even of the ritual adept.
2. As ungullible Hotar he has been set among the clans, Agni, gladdening, forethoughtful at the rites of distribution.
   Like Savitar he has braced his radiant beam upright; like a builder he propped his smoke up to heaven.
3. The (offering ladle) is held out, beautifully glowing, full of gifts, covered with ghee. (Agni), chosen (as Hotar), is making respectful circumambulation before the divine assemblage.
   The post (standing) up, like a new-born foal [?], anoints the (sacrificial) animals—itself well placed, well grounded.
4. Once the ritual grass has been strewn and the fire kindled, the Adhvaryu has stood upright, in delight.
   Like a cowherd Agni circles around (the sacrificial animals) with triple toil—he chosen as Hotar from of old.
5. With measured pace the Hotar goes around by himself—Agni, gladdening, of honeyed speech, truthful.
   His flames run like prizewinners. All creatures fear (him) when he has flashed.
6. Auspicious is your manifestation, o Agni of the lovely face, and it is dear, though you are terrible and capricious.
   Since they have not covered your flame with darkness, the palls of smoke have not placed their smudge on your body—
7. This (body) of (him) the devourer [/fire], which has not been obstructed from birth, nor have his mother and father ever (been obstructed) in their seeking (for him)—

therefore, well installed like an envoy, pure Agni shines among the clans stemming from Manu.

8. Agni, whom the twice five sisters dwelling together [/similarly clad] [=fingers] have begotten among the clans stemming from Manu—
awakening at dawn, gleaming like the tooth of one enveloped in flame, with a good mouth, sharp like an axe.
9. These golden (horses) of yours, Agni, bathed in ghee, the chestnuts directed straight, directed well,
the ruddy, bullish ones with testicles stretched out (behind from speed)—these wondrous ones have "called" the divine assemblage here—
10. These rays of yours, Agni, which proceed, overwhelming, irrepressible, turbulent,
are like falcons going the distance to the goal, very noisy like the Marutian troop.
11. A sacred formulation has been made for you, o kindled one. (The priest) will recite the solemn speech to (you as you) sacrifice. (Now you—) apportion (treasures).
The fire-priests have set down Agni as the Hotar of Manu, giving homage to (him as) "Laud of Āyu."

IV.7 (303) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: jagatī 1, anuṣṭubh 2–6, triṣṭubh 7–11

Although this hymn consists of verses in three different meters, it was clearly conceived as a unity, as was already seen by Oldenberg (1888: 153). The hymn begins, as often, with the ritual installation of the current sacrificial fire, which is set against the backdrop of the primal installation of Agni, treated in verses 1–5, in a non-insistent ring structure. Verses 6 and 7, though in different meters, express the central mysteries of Agni and therefore define a sort of omphalos. Verse 6 is structured as a series of paradoxes concerning the nature of fire. Verse 7, quite reminiscent of the omphalos verse IV.5.7, refers to the elements of the sacrifice in riddling fashion. The hymn then turns to Agni's role as messenger between Earth and Heaven (vss. 8–9, 11, first mentioned in vs. 3), with some vivid metaphorical description of fire's appearance and its consuming of flammable "food" (vss. 9–11).

1. This one has been installed here first by the installers, as best sacrificing Hotar, to be reverently invoked in the ceremonies,
whom Apnavāna and the Bhr̥gus made to shine, brilliant in the woods, extending to every clan.

2. Agni, when will there be manifestation of you, the god, in the regular order?
   For it was therefore that the mortals seized you as the one to be reverently invoked in the clans—
3. (The mortals) looking at (you,) truthful and discriminating (/widely observable) like heaven with its stars,
   (you) who create laughter [=fire's crackling] for all ceremonies in every house,
4. (You,) the swift messenger of Vivasvant, who sur(mount) all the domains,
   the Āyus brought (you) here as beacon, associated with the Bhṛgus, for every clan.
5. Him as observant Hotar did they set down in the regular order—
   gladdening, pure-flamed, best sacrificing, throughout his seven domains—
6. Him, enveloped in mothers who are ever new, enveloped in wood (yet) unfixed,
   set in hiding though brilliant, easily found but aiming who knows where.
7. When, at the separation of the grain [=spreading of the ritual grass?], at the same udder [=the sacrifice?], on the domain of truth [=the ritual ground?], the gods take pleasure,
   great Agni, on whom the oblation is bestowed with reverence, the truthful one, is always pursuing (his missions) for the ceremony.
8. You, as the knowing one, pursue your missions for the ceremony between the two world-halves, observing them both together.
   You speed as the messenger chosen from of old, since you know better the means of ascending to heaven.
9. Black is your course, (though) you are gleaming; your light is in front. The flickering beam of your (various) wondrous forms is single
   when (your mothers, though) not impregnated, conceive an embryo, and you, even immediately at birth, become a messenger.
10. Immediately at birth, his strength comes to light, when the wind fans his flame.
    He twists his sharp tongue into the thickets. Even hard foods he fragments with his jaws.
11. When thirstily he has grown with (his flame) thirsting for food, he makes the thirsty (flame) into his messenger—youthfully exuberant Agni.
    He accompanies the roaring of the wind as he grinds down (the bush); he incites it like a swift (horse); the steed is impelled.

IV.8 (304) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn shares some phraseology and themes with the immediately preceding IV.7, especially Agni's role as messenger, but it is far less complex than that hymn. It is also unlike that hymn in its prayers for rich goods from Agni in exchange for ritual service.

1. Your messenger, affording all possessions, immortal oblation-bearer,
 best sacrificer—I will aim straight toward him with a hymn.
2. For he knows the depository of goods; the great one knows the means of ascending to heaven.
 He will convey the gods hither.
3. He, the god, knows how to bow the gods here to the house for him who acts with truth.
 He will give especially dear goods.
4. He is Hotar, and he, understanding his mission, speeds between (heaven and earth),
 knowing the means of ascending to heaven.
5. May we, who have done pious service for Agni by giving oblations, be those
 who, thriving, kindle him.
6. They become far famed as winners through their wealth, they through their masses of heroes,
 who have placed their friendship in Agni.
7. On us may the riches craved by many converge day after day;
 to us may prizes move.
8. He, the inspired poet of the settled domains, of the sons of Manu, by his vast power
 pierces through (obstacles) as if with the snap (of a bow [string]).

IV.9 (305) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: gāyatrī

Like II.1 and II.11, this short hymn enumerates Agni's ritual roles by identifying him with various priests, but it is considerably simpler and more straightforward than either of those two hymns. The order of the priestly offices here is close to that found in II.1.

1. Agni, be gracious. You are great—you who have come here to the
   god-seeking people,
   to sit on the ritual grass.
2. He, the immortal difficult to deceive, pursuing (his ritual duties) among
   the clans stemming from Manu,
   has become messenger for all.
3. He is led around his seat as the Hotar, gladdening at the rituals of
   day(break),
   and he sits down as the Potar.
4. And Agni (leads) the Wives (of the Gods) at the ceremony [=Neṣṭar],
   and he is Houselord in the home,
   and he sits down as the Brahman.
5. You pursue (your ritual duty) as Upavaktar for the people who perform
   the ceremony,
   and you pursue the oblations of the sons of Manu.
6. And you also pursue the (ritual) mission of him whose ceremony you
   will enjoy—
   to convey the oblation of the mortal.
7. *Our* ceremony enjoy, *our* sacrifice, o Aṅgiras;
   hear *our* call.
8. Let your chariot, difficult to trick, encircle us on all sides,
   the chariot by which you guard the pious.

IV.10 (306) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: padapaṅkti, except mahāpadapaṅkti 5

This uncomplicated hymn begins with the sacrificial here-and-now and the poet's hope for the success of the sacrifice currently being performed. He then praises Agni's participation in the sacrifice, his brilliant appearance, and his protection of his mortal worshiper, ending with a prayer for good partnership with the gods and a strong statement of the umbilical tie between gods and men, as mediated through the sacrificial Agni. The image of the sacrifice as the shared udder of gods and men is also found in nearby Agni hymns: IV.7.7 and by implication IV.5.7.

Although the content of the hymn is straightforward, the meter is quite unusual, indeed confined to this one hymn (see Oldenberg 1888: 98; Arnold 1905: 239–40). It is thus not surprising that the Anukramaṇī's characterization of it, reproduced in the heading above, is not illuminating and is in fact somewhat misleading. Each verse consists of a series of five-syllable pādas (three per verse, except for vs. 5 containing four) followed by a single triṣṭubh pāda. The short pentads tend to present abbreviated syntactic constituents, such as similes or tightly organized noun

phrases, while the culminating triṣṭubh provides the frame into which the earlier mosaic pieces can be fitted. However, as the hymn progresses, the group of pentad pādas begins to operate independently of the triṣṭubh finale. In this hymn the medium is in many ways the message.

1. Agni, this (sacrifice) today may we bring to success with lauds of you—
   like a horse with praises,
   like a good resolve—(so that it) touches your heart.
2. For, Agni, it is therefore that you have become the charioteer of good
   resolve,
   of skill that brings success, of lofty truth.
3. By reason of these recitations of ours become inclined our way like
   sunlight,
   well disposed with all your faces, o Agni.
4. Singing with these songs, we would do pious service for you today,
   o Agni.
   Your gusts thunder forth like (those) of heaven.
5. Your manifestation is the sweetest, Agni—now by day, now by night.
   For beauty it shines like a gold ornament in the nearness.
6. Like purified ghee your body is spotless gleaming gold.
   This (flame?) of yours shines like a gold ornament, autonomous one.
7. Because, o Agni, even a hateful act already committed you drive away,
   bag and baggage,
   from the mortal who sacrifices just so, o truthful one,
8. Let our comradeship be propitious, our brotherhood, o Agni, (with
   respect) to you gods.
   This navel [=Agni/sacrifice] of ours is in the same seat, at the same udder
   (with you).

IV.11 (307) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This short hymn begins with a verse full of phonetic and morphological play. The middle two verses (3–4) contain seven repetitions of *tvád* "from you," all but one stationed at the beginning of the pāda. Verse 5 begins with *tvā́m*, "you" in a different case, to bring that sequence to a close. Verse 5 also deploys playful oppositions of gods and mortals, and the final verse is marked by alliterative sequences.

The hymn identifies Agni as the source of both material goods (vss. 3–4) and of poetic inspiration (vss. 2–3), and the highly wrought surface of this superficially simple hymn shows that the poet has put the latter gift to good use.

1. Auspicious is your face, mighty Agni; it shines here in nearness to the Sun.
   Gleaming to be seen, it is seen even by night. Not coarse is the food [=ghee] to be seen on its form.
2. Unloose inspiration for the singer (as if) through an aperture, o powerfully born Agni, in your excitation while you are being praised.
   What you, along with all the gods, will crave, that grant us, o brilliant, very great one—an ample thought.
3. From you, Agni, poetic compositions, from you inspired thoughts, from you are born solemn words to be realized.
   From you come chattels ornamented with heroes for the pious mortal whose thought is to the point.
4. From you is born the prizewinning, prize-bringing (horse), of extensive power, creating his own superiority, whose snorting is real,
   from you god-sped wealth, joy itself, from you the swift, speeding courser, o Agni.
5. You, Agni, (are) the first god (whom) the god-seekers seek to attract here with their hymnic visions—the mortals, o immortal, (seeking you) whose tongue is gladdening,
   who keep hatred away, domestic ally, household lord, no fool.
6. At a distance from us (keep) heedlessness, at a distance constraint, at a distance all malevolence, as you protect us.
   At evening (be) propitious, o Agni, son of strength, (to him) whom you as god even here accompany with well-being.

IV.12 (308) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The first half of this hymn (vss. 1–3) describes the rewards Agni gives to a pious sacrificer. The second half (vss. 4–6) is entirely different: it begs for release from unspecified offenses done by us, and although Agni is addressed in the vocative in all three verses, the tone is distinctly Ādityan, reminiscent of Vasiṣṭha's pleas for forgiveness from the most formidable of the Ādityas, Varuṇa, in Maṇḍala VII. In fact, the last verse (6) has a plural addressee ("good ones worthy of the sacrifice") in addition to Agni, and the verse is repeated exactly in X.126.8, an insistently Ādityan hymn.

1. Whoever will kindle you, Agni, with his offering ladle extended, whoever will make food for you three times in the same day,
   let him, victorious, be superior in heavenly brilliance in accordance with your purpose, o Jātavedas—he the observant one.

2. Whoever will labor to bring fuel to you, rendering service to the face of the great one, o Agni,
   he, kindling (you) every evening, every dawn, follows along, thriving in his wealth, smashing his foes.
3. Agni holds sway over lofty lordship, Agni over the prize, the highest wealth.
   He apportions treasure in due order to the mortal who does honor (to him)—he the youngest, autonomous one.
4. Whatever we have done to you, youngest one, in our human nature or through our heedless ways—whatever offense—
   make us without offense through unbinding [/Aditi]: let loose our transgressions in all directions, o Agni.
5. (Release us) from even a great offense in close quarters, Agni, from the enclosure [=imprisoning] of gods and of mortals.
   Let us, your comrades, never be harmed. Extend luck and lifetime to kith and kin.
6. Just as then you released the buffalo-cow bound by the foot, you good ones worthy of the sacrifice,
   so release constraint from us. (Let) our lifetime be further lengthened, Agni.

IV.13 (309) Agni (or Assorted Divinities)

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn either to Agni or to unspecified divinities, but as has long been recognized, it is really a hymn appropriate to dawn, mentioning the gods associated with this time of day: Dawn herself, the Aśvins, Savitar, and especially the Sun, who is found in all five verses. It forms a pair with the following hymn, IV.14, also devoted to Dawn though not so identified. For further on the similarities of these two hymns, see the introduction to IV.14.

The last three verses are especially striking, with several vivid images of the triumph of light over darkness in verses 3–4, and in the final verse (5) a speculative question about the sun—why does it not fall out of the sky?

1. Agni has looked toward the vanguard of the Dawns—benevolent (Agni) toward the treasure-conferring of the radiant (Dawns).
   Drive, Aśvins, to the dwelling of the one of good action. The Sun, the god, goes up with his light.
2. God Savitar has braced his radiant beam upright, brandishing his banner like a warrior seeking cattle.

Varuṇa, Mitra, (and the other Ādityas?) proceed according to their commandment, when they cause the Sun to mount into heaven.

3. The one whom they created to pull apart the darkness—those [=Ādityas?] with fixed peaceful abodes, who do not unharness until (reaching) their goal—
   that Sun, do the seven golden mares, youthfully exuberant, convey as spy of the whole moving world.
4. You drive with the (horses) that convey best, as you unravel the thread, stripping off the black garment (of night), o god.
   The rays of the Sun, shaking the darkness like a hide (for tanning), have set it down in the waters.
5. Not held firm, not tied down—how does this one not fall down, head over heels?
   With what autonomous power does he journey? Who has seen it? As prop of heaven, utterly fixed, he protects the vault.

IV.14 (310) Agni

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Like IV.13 this is a dawn hymn, and, as was noted there, it is closely paired with that hymn. The chief divinities are the same, mentioned in more or less the same order: Agni, Dawn, the Aśvins, Savitar, and the Sun; the final verses are identical; and the first two verses are stylistic variants of each other. In verse 1 of both hymns Agni looks toward the Dawns, and the Aśvins [/Nāsatyas] are urged to come to the sacrifice; in verse 2 Savitar braces his beacon, and the Sun rises.

The other two verses (3–4) deviate somewhat. In IV.13 these were devoted to the Sun, conveyed by seven mares, confronting darkness. Here verse 3 concerns Dawn as the horse conveying the Sun: the equine theme of IV.13.3 is thus matched, but with a different focus. In both hymns verse 4 also concerns driving, with horses that are "the best conveyors" (*váhiṣṭha*), but in IV.13 it is the Sun who is being conveyed, whereas in IV.14 it is the two Aśvins (unnamed).

These paired hymns give us valuable insight into the Ṛgvedic poets' compositional techniques, showing how the poets could produce variety even from a template of fairly specific themes (here vss. 1–2), and where the template allowed more freedom in developing those themes (here vss. 3–4).

1. God Agni, Jātavedas, has looked toward the Dawns, shining with all their might.
   Here, o Nāsatyas [=Aśvins], wide-ranging with your chariot, drive up to this sacrifice of ours.

2. God Savitar has braced his beacon upright, making light for all creation.
   He has filled heaven and earth and the space between—the Sun showing himself ever more widely with his rays.
3. The ruddy (mare) conveying (him) hither has come with her light, the great showy one, showing herself ever more with her rays.
   The goddess awakening (the world) for good faring, Dawn speeds with her well-yoked chariot.
4. Let the best conveyors convey you two [=Aśvins] here—the (best) chariots and horses at the break of dawn—
   for here are soma drinks for you two to drink the honey. At this sacrifice here, o bulls, exhilarate yourselves.
5. Not held firm, not tied down—how does this one not fall down, head over heels?
   With what autonomous power does he journey? Who has seen it? As prop of heaven, utterly fixed, he protects the vault.

IV.15 (311) Agni (1–6), Somaka Sāhadevya (7–8), Aśvins (9–10)

Vāmadeva Gautama
10 verses: gāyatrī

This final hymn of the Agni cycle in Maṇḍala IV consists of ten verses. Its length marks it as out of order in the cycle, since it follows a sequence of shorter hymns, but its internal structure is not entirely clear. It is generally agreed that the first three verses form a tr̥ca dedicated to Agni, and could therefore, as an independent hymn, be properly placed in the Agni cycle. The next three verses (4–6) could also form a tr̥ca to Agni and could likewise be properly placed, but the mention of Sr̥ñjaya Daivavāta suggests that the final four verses (7–10), a dānastuti to Somaka Sāhadeva, belong with verses 4–6, since Somaka's father, Sahadeva, is elsewhere (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 7.34) identified as a Sr̥ñjaya.

We are of the opinion that the hymn consists of an originally independent single tr̥ca (vss. 1–3), and a second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) with a loosely attached four-verse dānastuti (7–10), but that it is unlikely that either of the tr̥cas formed a part of the original cycle. Note especially that the two preceding hymns, IV.13–14, are really not standard Agni hymns, but more generally applicable to the divinities of dawn, and this change in subject matter suggests that these dawn-centered hymns were added at some point at the end of the Agni cycle proper. Only later were the fragments found in IV.15 appended to that enlarged cycle.

In any case, all three verses of the first tr̥ca concern Agni's circling of the sacrifice, a ritual act characteristic of the animal sacrifice, as we have seen previously in this maṇḍala (IV.6.3–5). The second tr̥ca, especially its second verse (5), seems to concern militant Agni and suggests that only a mortal who is a hero himself can

control such a fire: the implication is that Sṛñjaya Daivavāta, mentioned in verse 4, is such a man. This provides a transition to the "praise of the gift" in verses 7–10, where a prince of the Sṛñjaya family is the patron. The poet praises Prince Sāhadevya for giving him two horses (playfully in vs. 7) and prays to the Aśvins to reward the prince with a long life. There is another, more subtle connection between 4–6 and 7–10: the last verse of the tṛca (vs. 6) alludes to the ritual drink soma (as "the red child of heaven"), though it is not named; the name (or hypocoristic: note the *-ka*-suffix characteristic of nicknames) of the patron in 7–10 is Somaka (vs. 9).

1. Agni, the Hotar at our ceremony, while being a prizewinning (horse), is led around,
   the god devoted to the sacrifice among the gods.
2. Agni drives with triple toil around the ceremony like a charioteer,
   establishing a pleasurable offering among the gods.
3. Agni, the lord of the prize, the sage poet, has marched around the oblations,
   establishing treasures for the pious.

4. Here is the one who is kindled in front when Sṛñjaya Daivavāta (is present),
   the brilliant (Agni) who belittles the foes.
5. Over such a fire as this (only) a hero should hold sway as mortal (master),
   over this one who has sharp fangs but grants rewards.
6. Him like a winning steed, like the red child of heaven [=soma?],
   they keep grooming day after day.

7. If he will "awaken" me with two fallow bays—Prince Sāhadevya—
   I will "get up" like one summoned.
8. And these two fallow bays, worthy of honor, from Prince Sāhadevya
   I took as soon as they were offered.
9. He is yours, god Aśvins—Prince Sāhadevya.
   Let him be long-lived—(this) Somaka.
10. You god Aśvins, make Prince Sāhadevya long-lived.

IV.16 (312) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
21 verses: triṣṭubh

This first hymn of the Vāmadeva Indra cycle is rich in mythological material. It begins with two verses devoted to the journey motif—Indra coming to our soma sacrifice—but already in the second half of verse 2 and the first half of verse 3 the

legendary poet and sage Uśanā Kāvya, who will figure later in the hymn, is introduced by indirection. The Vala and Vr̥tra myths are interwoven in the next section of the hymn, verses 3cd through 8, their interpenetration encouraged by the fact that almost no participants are explicitly named in the earlier part of the section. The last two verses clearly separate the two myths: verse 7 by naming Vr̥tra, verse 8 by the very words of the dog Saramā and her naming of Indra's companions in the Vala myth, the Aṅgirases.

Verses 9–14 concern the saga of the hero Kutsa, the poet Uśanā Kāvya, and Indra, a story that is, as usual, narratively elusive. As noted above, Uśanā Kāvya was introduced earlier in the hymn by name; he is not named in this section, but deeds involving him in other references to the myth are also found here: Indra and Kutsa's joint journey to his house for help (vs. 10ab; cf., e.g., I.130.9) and the help he provides to their venture (vs. 11), help which elsewhere takes the material form of the mace he presents to Indra (I.121.12, V.34.2).

Our version also has the curious motif of the woman who seeks to tell the difference between Indra and Kutsa, who have identical appearance (vs. 10cd). This reminds us of the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa story (JB III.199–200), in which Kutsa was born from Indra's thigh and therefore looks identical to Indra. Kutsa takes advantage of this by having sex with Indra's wife, who claims, when Indra discovers them together, not to be able to tell Indra and Kutsa apart. The Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa story appears, at least to us, to have been secondarily generated to explain the enigmatic motif in our R̥gvedic verse, which does not suggest any misbehavior on the part of the truth-distinguishing woman. Certainly Indra and Kutsa in partnership go on to destroy named and nameless enemies and to tear off the wheel of the Sun's chariot (vss. 12–13), an action also prominent, if enigmatic, in other mentions of this story (I.130.9, I.174.5, V.29.10). A successful act of distinguishing Indra (from Kutsa?) seems to be alluded to in verse 14b, bringing closure to this motif. This recognition was aided by the strong light of the sun. It is unclear whether the contribution of the sun's light here has anything to do with the damage inflicted on his chariot by Indra and Kutsa.

The remainder of the hymn consists of appeals to Indra for help in contests and battles and for largesse (vss. 15–19), with two closing verses (20–21) summing up the making of the poem and the hopes we have of it.

The hymn is full of deep and surface puns, phonological play, and subtle echoes across verses, and the poet takes some delight in setting up and then frustrating our grammatical and mythological expectations.

1. Let him drive here (to be) really present—the bounteous one possessing
   the silvery drink. Let his fallow bays run to us.
   It is just for him that we have pressed the well-skilled stalk. Being
   hymned, he will make his meal here.
2. Unhitch as if at the end of your road, o champion, in order to find
   exhilaration in this soma-pressing of ours today.

Like Uśanā, the ritual adept [=Agni] will recite his solemn speech, his thought, for the lordly one who attends to it—

3. Bringing the rites to realization like the sage poet [=Uśanā Kāvya] a secret, when the bull [=pressing stone] will chant as he drinks out the gush.

   In just that way he [=Indra?] begot the seven bards of heaven; just with the (coming of) day they created the ritual patterns as they were singing.

4. When the sun, beautiful to see, was found through their chants [/with its rays], they made shine the great light which is at dawn.

   The best of men in his dominance made (it possible) for men to penetrate the blind, bilious shades of darkness with their gaze.

5. Possessing the silvery drink, Indra increased without limit. He filled both world-halves with his greatness.

   Even beyond that did it reach—the greatness of him who surmounted all the worlds.

6. The able one, knowing all manly (labors), together with his eager companions, gave leave to the waters.

   The fire-priests, who split the stone just with their words, opened the pen full of cows.

7. You smashed away Vr̥tra, who had been enclosing the waters. Of one mind with you, Earth helped your mace.

   You sped the seaward floods forward, becoming their lord by your power, you daring champion.

8. When you tore open the rock for the waters, o much-invoked one, Saramā had appeared to you before:

   "As our leader, tear out an abundant prize, breaking apart the cowpens, being sung by the Aṅgirases."

9. In your dominance you came here to the poet in need [=Kutsa?] at the winning of the sun, o bounteous one with your mind on men.

   With your help you urged him on at the invocation to heavenly brilliance; but the Dasyu, possessing magic arts but no sacred formulation, sank down.

10. Drive here to the home (of Uśanā Kāvya) with your Dasyu-smashing mind. In companionship with you, Kutsa will become eager.

    Do you two, having the same form, sit down each in his own womb. She is trying to distinguish between you two—she is a woman who distinguishes the truth.

11. Seeking help, you drive with Kutsa on the same chariot—you, the goader of the Wind, the master of the two fallow bays,

    seeking to hold onto the two silvery (horses of the Wind) like a prize to be secured, so that on that day the poet [=Uśanā Kāvya] will exert himself for decisive (help).

12. For Kutsa you laid low insatiable Śuṣṇa, who brings bad harvest, with his thousands, before the day's first meal.
    Immediately crush out the Dasyus with (the weapon) that is Kutsa, and then tear off the wheel of the Sun at the moment of encounter.
13. You subjugated Pipru Mṛgaya, swollen with power, to Ṛjiśvan, the son of Vidathin.
    You scattered down the dark fifty thousand. You shredded their fortresses, like worn-out age a cloak—
14. Placing your body in nearness to the sun, so that the form of you, the immortal one, could be distinguished,
    like a wild elephant, clothing yourself in might, and fearsome like a lion when you bear your weapons.
15. To Indra have desires gone seeking goods, taking their pleasure at the soma-pressing as if at a (contest) having the sun as its prize,
    (desires) seeking fame, laboring with hymns, delightful like a home, like prosperity beautiful to see.
16. Just him, Indra easy to call, would we call upon for you—him who performed the many manly (labors),
    who quickly brings a prize worth securing even to a singer like me, him whose largesse is eagerly sought.
17. If a sharp missile will fly in an instant amid some one of the peoples, o champion,
    if there will be a terrible clash, o comrade, then, as ever, become the herdsmen of our body.
18. Will you be the helper of Vāmadeva's insights? Will you be a partner—no wolf—at the winning of prizes?
    We have come after you (who are) solicitude for us. Widely proclaimed, may you always be there for the singer.
19. While we dominate the strangers in every contest with these men who seek you, Indra, with the bounteous ones, o bounteous one,
    just as the heavens dominate with their heavenly brilliance, may we find elation through many nights and autumns.
20. Just in this way we have made a sacred formulation for Indra, the bull-strong bull, as the Bhṛgus do a chariot,
    so that he will never keep us far away from his partnership, and he will be our powerful helper, the protector of our bodies.
21. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
    A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.17 (313) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
21 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā virāj 15

The hymn begins with the simple declaration "You, Indra, are great," and in some sense the rest of the hymn just develops this statement. The first section of the hymn (vss. 1–8) treats Indra's deeds in the past (though with some interludes in the present, esp. vs. 5), particularly the Vṛtra slaying and its cosmic repercussions. Verse 8 sums up this section by detailing the qualities that make Indra worthy of our attention. In verses 9–13 Indra's abilities to conquer foes and win prizes are celebrated for their present relevance. The following two verses (14 and 15, its stunted single-pāda adjunct) make a brief and quite obscure foray into the Etaśa myth. The final five verses (16–20), before the last (21) repeated from IV.16.21, express our hopes for Indra's bounty and aid, and, especially, our longing for him to be in affectionate relationship with us.

Several themes surface from time to time in the hymn. Indra is often called *maghávan* "bounteous (patron)" throughout (vss. 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 [twice], 20), even though our prayers for goods and services do not become insistent until the end. More striking is the motif of Indra's birth and, especially, the uncertainty about the identity of his father. His birth in mentioned in verses 2, 4, 7, and 12. In verse 4 it is said that Heaven is considered to be his begetter, but "is considered" throws that statement into question, and it is not even clear whether "the best craftsman," to whom the act is (also?) ascribed, is Heaven or not. It may well be Tvaṣṭar, called "good craftsman" elsewhere (I.85.9) and in apparent parental relationship with Indra in some passages (e.g., III.48.2–4; see also the next hymn, IV.18.3). Verse 12ab casts even more doubt on his parentage, which Indra himself seems not to be clear about. This birth motif foreshadows the next hymn, the famous IV.18 featuring the direct speech of Indra's mother at the time of his birth.

1. You, Indra, are great. To you did Earth, to you did Heaven
   magnanimously yield dominion.
   After you smashed Vṛtra with your strength, you let loose the rivers,
   which had been swallowed by the serpent.
2. At your birth Heaven trembled and Earth flinched in fear of your
   turbulence and of the battle fury that is yours.
   The well-founded mountains throbbed, the wastelands shuddered, and
   the waters ran.
3. He split the mountain, hurling his mace with his strength, revealing his
   power, displaying his might.
   He smashed Vṛtra with his mace in his exhilaration. With their bull
   struck down, the waters ran swiftly.
4. Rich in heroes, Heaven is considered to be your begetter. The best
   craftsman was the creator of Indra,

who begot him, booming and bearing the good mace, not to be moved, any more than the Earth from its seat.

5. Who, just alone, sets the lands in motion—the king of the separate peoples, Indra invoked by many.
   All celebrate him, the real one, and celebrate the generosity of the god to the singer and the patron.
6. Entirely his were the soma-drinks; entirely for the lofty one were the most exhilarating exhilarating-drinks.
   Entirely the goods-lord of goods you became. You placed all the separate peoples in (the path of) your giving, Indra.
7. And on first being born, you placed all the separate peoples in (the path of) your onslaught, Indra.
   With your mace you hewed apart the serpent who was lying against the (mountain) slopes, o bounteous one.
8. (I call upon) him who smashes entirely, bold and brawny Indra, the great and limitless bull bearing the good mace,
   who is the smasher of Vr̥tra and the winner of the prize, the giver of bounties, the bounteous one who brings good presents.
9. This one forces his united opponents into hiding, he who alone is famed as the bounteous one in contests.
   This one brings the prize that he wins. Might we be dear to him in his partnership.
10. And this one is famed for conquering and smiting, and this one brings the cows forward to become his through battle.
    When Indra makes his fury real, everything, both what stays firm and what flinches, becomes afraid before him.
11. Indra conquered the cows altogether, altogether (the bounties) in gold and horses—he who through the many (autumns) is a bounteous patron,
    the best of men with these able men of his, the apportioner of wealth and the one who brings the goods altogether.
12. How much does Indra know of his mother, how much of his father, his begetter, who begot him?
    He who in an instant raises his tempest, as the wind does when sped by thundering clouds,
13. He deprives the man dwelling peacefully of his peace. The bounteous one raises the dust in confusion,
    a shatterer like Heaven with its missiles. But the bounteous one places his praiser in goods.
14. This one impelled the wheel of the Sun and stopped Etaśa as he ran.
    Moving crookedly, he [=Agni?] sprinkles it [=Sun? Sun's horse or wheel?] at the black base of the hide, on the womb of this realm,
15. Like a Hotar performing his own sacrifice on the dark (hide).
16. Seeking cows, seeking horses, seeking prizes, we, inspired poets, rousing the bull Indra for partnership;

seeking wives, we bestir the wife-giver providing imperishable aid, like a bucket in a well.

17. Become our protector, showing yourself as a friend who watches over and dispenses mercy to your comrades in soma,
our partner and father, the best father of fathers, the creator conferring vitality on the man longing for wide space.
18. Become the helper and partner of those seeking your partnership. Being sung, Indra, confer vitality on the man who praises,
for we have fervently acted for you, exalting you with these labors, Indra.
19. Indra the bounteous, praised when he (smashes) obstacles, alone smashes those many and unopposable (obstacles).
The singer is dear to him, under whose protection none, neither gods nor mortals, obstruct (him [=the singer]).
20. In just this way shall bounteous Indra, conferring abundance, make these things come true for us, as the unassailable sustainer of the bordered domains.
You, as king of (all) the races, set fame upon us, which is a great thing for the singer.
21. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.18 (314) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
13 verses: triṣṭubh

A famous and enigmatic hymn recounting the prodigious and unnatural birth of Indra, partly in dialogue form. The hymn begins with a two-verse exchange between Indra's mother and the as-yet-unborn Indra: she tries to persuade him to be born in normal fashion, but, like many heroes world-wide, he insists on an unusual exit, from her side. Indra is already conscious of his great destiny (see vs. 2cd). The pregnancy has lasted abnormally long (see vs. 4ab), and after the birth Indra's mother appears to abandon him to make his own way (vss. 3ab, 4ab, 8ab, 10cd), but also hides him (vs. 5ab) and worries about his fate (vs. 11ab). Again like heroes the world over, Indra is born full-grown and ready to perform great feats (see vs. 5cd), so that his mother's protection is not necessary. In verse 3 he follow his mother as she abandons him and ends up at Tvaṣṭar's house, where he drinks Tvaṣṭar's soma. Elsewhere Tvaṣṭar is presented as Indra's father (e.g., III.48.2–4, possibly in the

previous hymn IV.17.4), and by stealing and drinking his soma, Indra defeats him (see III.48, where Indra's mother abets him). Our verse contains no mention of this rivalry and conflict, but it may be alluded to indirectly toward the end of the hymn (see below).

In the middle part of the hymn (vss. 6–9) another set of voices (at least in our opinion) joins the dialogue, that of various waters. These waters seem to represent benevolent foster mothers (see esp. vss. 7–8), like the rivers attending the birth of Urvaśī's son in X.95.7, and their protective aid for Indra contrasts with his mother's ambivalence and alienation. But they are also assimilated to the waters released by Indra in the Vr̥tra myth, as Indra's mother makes explicit in verse 7. It may be that both identities were suggested by a natural phenomenon, the breaking of a pregnant woman's waters right before birth; the sudden release of those waters is reminiscent of the release in the Vr̥tra myth, while the association of the waters with the infant being born suggests their beneficent relationship with the fetus in the womb. Indra's mother ends this section by disavowing any blame for Indra's temporary disadvantage in the Indra–Vr̥tra battle (vs. 9). If we are correct, the second pāda of this verse alludes glancingly to snakes' ability to reconfigure their jaws to swallow large prey, a striking naturalistic image—one of the incidental fragments of realia to be gleaned from the R̥gveda.

The final verses of the hymn are even more puzzling than what precedes them. After the episode of the waters and the Vr̥tra battle, we return to the original scene of Indra's birth and his mother's abandonment of him (vs. 10), though in her worry about his isolation she follows him (vs. 11ab), a mirror image of him following her in verse 3ab. He does find a companion to aid in the Vr̥tra battle, namely Viṣṇu, in verse 11cd. The next verse (12) asks a series of rhetorical questions—or they would be rhetorical if we were certain of the answers. The questions center around a family tragedy of a type very familiar from world mythology: a father with murderous intent toward his son (possibly still in the womb; vs. 12b) and the killing of the father by the son (vs. 12d), an act that leaves his mother a widow (vs. 12a). Is the father Tvaṣṭar, mentioned briefly and without hostility in the earlier part of the hymn (vs. 3), or Vr̥tra, whose destruction was depicted several times (vss. 7cd, 9)—or both, or neither? In any case the questions are reminiscent of the question near the end of the famous Indra-Vr̥tra hymn I.32, when Indra flees after winning the battle: verse 14 "Whom did you see, Indra, as the avenger of the serpent when fear came into your heart after you smashed him, / and when you crossed over the ninety-nine flowing rivers, like a frightened falcon through the airy realms?" And the final verse of IV.18 (13) seems to depict Indra after such a flight, alone and in exile, eating taboo food out of necessity and witness to the dishonoring of his mother because of her widowed state. His own condition only improves when the falcon steals soma and brings it to him (vs. 13d), a tale that will be treated later in this cycle in IV.26–27.

Although the abrupt shifts of scene and chronology and the lack of context in each new scene produce some frustration in the reader (not to speak of the

translator), the vivid focus of each episode and the dramatic tension in each snippet of speech cause the hymn to resonate in the imagination long after a more rational account would have done.

1. [Indra's Mother:] Here is the ancient proven path from which all the gods were born.
   Just from it should he be born full-grown.—Do not cause your mother to fall [=miscarry] in that way.
2. [Indra:] I will not go out from there—it's a hard plunge. I will go out crossways, from your side.
   Many are the things as yet undone that are to be done by me: I will do battle with one and make peace with another.
3. [Narrator:] He gazed after his mother going away. "I cannot *not* follow—now shall I follow!"
   In the house of Tvaṣṭar, Indra drank soma, a hundred's worth of the pressed (drink) in the two cups.
4. [Narrator:] How could she put aside the one whom she bore for a thousand months and many autumns?
   For surely he has no equal among those born and those yet to be born.
5. [Narrator:] Thinking him somehow a disgrace, his mother concealed Indra, who overflowed with heroic strength.
   But he stood up on his own, clothing himself in a cloak. He filled the two world-halves as he was being born.
6. [Indra:] These (waters) flow, babbling, like truthful women together shouting their witness.
   Ask them! What is this they are saying? What rock, what barrier are the waters battering?
7. [Indra's Mother:] What did they say as invitations to him? Do the waters intend to take on Indra's disgrace?
   It was *my* son who set loose these rivers, after having smashed Vr̥tra with his great murderous weapon.
8. [Various voices of the waters:] It was not because of me that the young woman cast you aside. It was not because of me that Kuṣavā (Evil Birth) swallowed you.
   But it was certainly because of me that the waters would show mercy to the child. It was certainly because of me that Indra stood up with his might.
9. [Indra's Mother:] It was not because of me that the cobra, having pierced you down, smashed apart his jaws (to swallow) you, o bounteous one.
   Then, (though) pierced down, having gotten the upper hand, you utterly crushed the head of the Dāsa with your murderous weapon.

10. [Narrator:] The heifer gave birth to the sturdy, powerfully charging, unassailable bull, the brawny Indra.
    The unlicked calf—his mother impelled him to wander, seeking by himself a way for himself.
11. And his mother followed the track of the buffalo, (thinking,) "Yonder gods are abandoning you, my son."
    Then Indra said as he was about to smash Vr̥tra: "Viṣṇu, my companion, stride out widely."
12. Who made your mother a widow? Who tried to smash you as you lay, as you wandered?
    What god was merciful toward you when you destroyed your father, having grasped him by the foot?
13. [Indra:] Out of need I cooked for myself the entrails of a dog. I found none who was merciful among the gods.
    I saw his wife being dishonored. Then the falcon carried the honey here to me.

IV.19 (315) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Until the end, this hymn focuses almost entirely on the Vr̥tra-slaying and especially on the release of the waters after the slaying. In the first two verses Indra is chosen, by the gods and the world-halves, for the task, and he assumes the kingship. The actual slaying and the splitting of the mountains to set the waters free occupy the next verses (through vs. 5), and other feats of Indra regarding the waters—stopping them for his clients Turvīti and Vayya in verse 6, impregnating them in verse 7—are mentioned. Indeed, verse 7 lushly depicts the fertile and fructifying power of liquid in many forms. This main section of the hymn is brought to a close in verse 8, which efficiently summarizes the main points of the Vr̥tra myth.

Verse 9 serves as a somewhat bizarre coda. It celebrates three of Indra's great deeds that are regularly mentioned together: he rescues the shunned son of an unmarried girl, makes a blind man see, and causes a lame man to walk (cf., e.g., II.13.12, 15.7; I.112.8). But here each of these deeds has an odd twist: the boy is being eaten by female ants; the blind man "takes a serpent" (an unrecoverable pun or piece of slang, in our view); and the lame man is "broken in the 'pot'" or "breaks the pot" (slang for "hip"?). And it is also unclear why this verse has been tacked onto the end of a hymn that is otherwise remarkably consistent thematically. It may be that the "unwed girls" (*agrū́*) in verse 7, a metaphor for the rivers, suggested to

the poet the episode of the unwed girl (*agrū́*) who abandons her son out of shame, and it may also be that this proverbial episode of a mother's abandonment of her son resonated with Indra's own experience with his mother at his birth, treated so dramatically in the preceding hymn (IV.18).

The hymn ends with two summary verses (10, 11). In the former the poet announces to Indra the hymn he has just completed, while the latter is the refrain verse of the Vāmadeva Indra cycle (see IV.16–17, 20–24).

1. So it is you, mace-wielding Indra, that all the gods, our easily invoked helpers,
   and both world-halves choose now—singling you out, the great one alone, strong and lofty, at the smashing of Vr̥tra.
2. Like old men the gods let go, and you became the universal king, Indra, acquiring your own true womb [=place].
   You smashed the serpent lying around the flood; you dug out the courses for all the nourishing streams.
3. The insatiable serpent, stretched out, lying against the seven slopes,
   did you dismember with your mace in his jointless part, o Indra—
   (making him) not to be awakened, unawakening, gone to sleep.
4. Indra made the earth shake to its bottom with his strength, as the wind does the water with its forces.
   He knotted up the strongholds, eager in his own strength; he cut down the peaks of the mountains.
5. They burst, as women burst out their embryo. Like chariots the stones went forth all at once.
   You satisfied (the waters) flowing widely, and you subdued their waves.
   You made the blocked rivers flow, Indra.
6. For Turvīti and Vayya you brought to rest the great flowing watercourse with its all-nourishing streams
   and the moving flood, because of their reverence. You made the rivers easy to cross, Indra.
7. He made the unwed girls swell like surging spurts (of water)—the parched young women knowing the truth.
   He saturated the wastelands and thirsty fields. Indra got milk from the barren cows, who thus had a husband of wondrous power.
8. Having smashed Vr̥tra, he set loose the rivers, welcomed [/gurgling] through many dawns and autumns.
   Indra drilled out the streams, which had been surrounded and hard pressed, to flow along the earth.
9. You brought the son of the unwed girl, as he was being eaten by female ants, out from their lair, o master of the fallow bays.
   The blind man saw after taking the serpent. The man broken in the "pot" [=hip?] set out; his joints fit together.

10. Knowing them, I speak forth your ancient deeds, o inspired one, to (you) who know the deeds,
    in just the way that you accomplished them, o king—the bullish and manly labors welcomed for themselves.
11. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
    A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.20 (316) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The general pattern of an invitation/journey hymn is followed here. Indra's journey to our sacrifice is treated in the first two verses, with his attendance at the sacrifice and acceptance of the offerings found in the following two (3–4). The invitation is summarized in verse 5. His reciprocal obligation to give generously to his worshipers dominates the rest of the hymn, and without overt mention of the Vala myth, the poet repeatedly likens Indra's acts of giving to his opening of the cowpen and releasing its contents (vss. 6, 8, 9). A subtle reference to the Vr̥tra myth may be found in verse 7: no "obstructor" (*vartár*) keeps Indra from giving, using the root *vr̥* "obstruct," found in Vr̥tra, whose name is literally "obstacle."

The hymn several times uses gambling vocabulary (vss. 3, 8), and there are some other striking images, such as the two similes in the first half of verse 5.

1. Here to us from afar and here to us from nearby will powerful Indra drive for help, creating his own superiority—
   the lord of men with the mace in his arm, with his most powerful (men) overcoming battlers in combat and conflicts.
2. Here to us let Indra drive with his fallow bays, right here, turned our way for help and benefit.
   He will stand—that mace-bearing, bounteous one, conferring abundance—beside this sacrifice of ours at the gaining of prizes.
3. Setting this sacrifice of ours in front, o Indra, you will gain our intention.
   Like (a gambler) with the best throw to gain the stakes, with you, o mace-bearer, might we win the contest with the stranger.
4. Being eager and of favorable mind in our midst, now (drink) of the well-pressed soma, o autonomous one.
   Drink, Indra, of the honey brought before you. You will reach complete exhilaration with the soma-stalk coming from the back (of the mountain).

5. He who abounds in new seers like a fruited tree, who is a winner like a man with a sickle,
   much-invoked Indra do I invite here, setting my mind on him like a dashing youth on a maiden.
6. He who is self-strong like a mountain, lofty and powerful Indra, born from of old for conquest,
   he splits open the *cowpen as a fearsome (wild beast) does a sturdy (pen), (the pen) overflowing with goods like a bucket with water.
7. For whom by nature there now exists no obstructor and no hinderer of benefit and bounty,
   o strong and powerful one, boiling up and over, give riches to us, o much invoked one.
8. You are master of wealth and of the peaceful dwelling of the settled domains, and you open the pen of cows.
   Doing your best for men in the clashes, hitting the jackpot, you are the guide to an abundant heap of goods.
9. Because of what ability is he famed as the most able?—that ability by which the lofty one does everything instantly.
   He is the best at prying apart narrow straits for the man who does much pious service, and he establishes material property for the singer.
10. Do not neglect us! Bring and give us what of yours is to be given in abundance to the pious man.
    At this new gift we shall proclaim it in this hymn recited for you, praising you, o Indra.
11. – Now praised, O Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
    A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.21 (317) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The first verses of this hymn, especially 1 and 3, are quite reminiscent of the opening of the preceding hymn, IV.20, with the invitation to Indra to come to our sacrifice from wherever he might be, and the hymn promises to be a straightforward celebration of Indra's presence at the sacrifice and our praise and offering to him, in the hopes of his goods and help. But the hymn veers off into a different, and deeply puzzling, direction. The pivot is verse 5, which begins with a relative clause as does

verse 4, leading us to expect that the referent in verse 5 will be the same as in verse 4, namely Indra, the subject of our hymn. But it is not, as the last word reveals, but rather the Hotar, here almost certainly the god Agni.

The next three verses (6–8) share a number of features: repeated phrases (especially the *góhe* phrase of 6b, 7c, 8c), metrical irregularity in their odd pādas (6c, 7a, 7c), morphological and syntactic parallelism, and patterns of phonological and morphosyntactic repetition. But what they especially share is almost impenetrable obscurity. In our admittedly speculative interpretation, these verses take off from the Agni verse (5) and treat simultaneously the kindling of the ritual fire, which initiates the sacrifice here and now, and the Vala myth. As we noted in the introduction to IV.20, the twin of this hymn in some ways, the Vala myth, is a backgrounded model for Indra's generous giving in that hymn. It should also be remembered that the Agni hymns of this maṇḍala frequently take the Vala myth as their subject (see esp. IV.1 and 2), despite the fact that Agni is not usually a participant in that myth. Thus a condensed version of the Vala myth embedded in an Indra hymn but focusing on Agni is compatible with the larger concerns of the Vāmadeva poets.

In verse 6 the gods coming to the sacrifice seem to be compared to the Aṅgirases going to the Vala cave—though neither group is mentioned by name—and the seat of both groups is identified as the "secret place" (*góha*) of the Auśija, a vr̥ddhi derivative that we interpret as referring to the whole company of Uśij-priests, or fire-priests. In the second half of the verse the ritual fire is kindled, though with difficulty. The kindled fire roars to life in verse 7a, enabling the sacrifice to proceed (pāda b) and the cows in the Vala cave to go forth (pādas cd)—expressed in increasingly compressed phraseology. The final verse of this section (8) is the one that most clearly alludes to the opening of the Vala cave, using several of the signature words of that myth, including the verb *vidát* "found, finds," which several times in the Vala myth takes "cows" as object (I.62.3, V.45.8, X.68.11). But in our verse the object is omitted, presumably to allow the simultaneous reading "cows" (for the Vala myth) and "goods" (for the ritual here-and-now).

Having thus provided Indra with a mythic model for generous giving (however cryptically phrased), the poet then reproaches Indra in verse 9 for not participating in the sacrificial give-and-take. The poet ends the hymn with a more conventional summary verse and plea for goods and help (vs. 10), followed by the Vāmadeva Indra-cycle refrain (vs. 11).

1. Let Indra drive here, near to us, for help. Praised, let the champion be
   here as our feasting companion,
   he whose powers are many when he has grown strong, (whose)
   overwhelming dominion, like heaven, will thrive.
2. Here will you praise the bullish forces of him alone, the powerfully
   brilliant and powerfully generous man,
   whose resolve, conquering and victorious like a sovereign king making
   ceremonial distributions, overwhelms the separate peoples.

3. Let Indra along with the Maruts drive here from heaven or from the earth, swiftly from the sea or from fertile ground,
   from the realm of solar glory, or from afar, from the seat of truth, to help us.
4. Who is master of substantial, lofty wealth, him will we praise at the ceremonial distributions—Indra,
   who is the winner along with Vāyu when (refreshments) consisting of cows are at stake and who boldly leads (us) forth to a better state.
5. Whoever, piling reverence upon reverence, rouses speech, begetting it in order to perform the sacrifice,
   aiming straight, granting many favors, he should bring Indra here to the (ritual) seats with his hymns—he, the Hotar [=Agni?].
6. When they [=the gods/Aṅgirases?], seeking a holy place, will hasten to the rock with holy fervor, taking their seats at the secret place of (the company of) the fire-priests [=ritual ground/Vala cave?],
   the Hotar [=Agni] of (the company) belonging to the household, (though) he is hard to kindle, (comes into being) here—he who is the great draft-horse for us in the (ritual) enclosures.
7. When in its entirety the explosive force of the devouring bull [=Agni] accompanies him [=Agni?], for the praiser to take his reward,
   when (it accompanies) him secretly to the secret place of (the company of) the fire-priests, when (it accompanies him) in order (for the praiser) to go forth to insight, forth to exhilaration—
8. When he opens out the mountain's enclosures into wide spaces and quickens the swift currents of the waters with gushes of milk,
   he finds (the cows?) in the secret place of the buffalo, of the bull, when those of good insight convey him for the prize.
9. Auspicious are your hands and well-fashioned your palms, as ones that hold out largesse to the praiser, o Indra.
   Why are you sitting it out? And why do you not find exhilaration? And why do you not rouse yourself higher and higher to give?
10. Just in this way, Indra, the real sovereign king of goods, the smiter of Vṛtra, made wide space for Pūru.
    O you praised by many, in accordance with your will, show your power over wealth for us. Might I have a share in your divine help.
11. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
    A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.22 (318) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Within a slender frame depicting Indra's presence at and participation in our sacrifice is fitted a celebration of Indra's great deeds and, especially, his aggressiveness in performing them. The hymn begins (vs. 1) with a brief catalogue of the elements Indra wants at the ritual, which leads immediately to the praise of Indra's uncontrolled power, the terror he inspires in the cosmos, and the fortunate result of his greatest deed, the release of the waters following his defeat of Vr̥tra (vss. 2–7). Verse 8 marks a return to the ritual here-and-now, with a hope that our preparations will bring Indra to our sacrifice. Verses 9–10 then list the various things we want Indra to do for us, marked by the heavy repetition of "for us/to us" at the beginning of every half-verse (a pattern actually begun in vs. 8c with "toward us," and ending with an extra repetition in the final pāda 10d). The hymn ends with the Vāmadeva Indra-cycle refrain (vs. 11).

1. What of ours Indra enjoys and what he is eager for, that of ours will the great, explosive one arrange to be right here:
   the sacred formulation, the praise song, the soma, and the recitations—he, the bounteous, who goes on bearing the stone with strength,
2. The bull, hurling with his arms the four-edged (weapon), which is the repository of bullish strength—the powerful, most manly, able one,
   clothing himself in Paruṣṇī River [/gray] wool [=foam] for beauty—(the Paruṣṇī River) in whose tufts he has wrapped himself for partnership (with the Maruts).
3. The god who, being born as the best of gods, is great by reason of his prizes and his great explosive powers,
   having taken the eager mace in his arms, he makes heaven tremble by his onslaught, as well as earth,
4. (And) all the (river)banks and the many (river)beds—(and) heaven trembles, and the earth, before the towering one at his birth.
   The explosive one brings the two mothers here [=Heaven and Earth?], (brings) here (the milk? [=rain?]) of the cow. The winds in their circling roar constantly like men.
5. These great (deeds) of you, the great one, o Indra, are to be proclaimed at all the pressings:
   that, o daring champion, having dared with daring, you worked over the serpent with your mace and strength.
6. These (deeds) of yours all come true, o powerfully manly one: the cows stream forth from the udder of a bull;
   then, being afraid of you, o you of bullish mind, the rivers charge forth at speed.

7. Right now, o Indra, master of the fallow bays, with your help these goddesses, the sisters, are praised,
when you let loose those (waters) that had been hard pressed, to let them flow along their long trajectory.
8. The (soma-)plant has been squeezed out like an exhilarating river. By the labor of the laboring (priest), might the skill
of bright blazing (Agni) pull you here toward us, as a swift (horse pulls on) the powerfully strong reins of the cow [=leather?].
9. For us activate your highest, most distinguished manly strengths and powers altogether, o overpowering one.
For us weaken obstacles to become easily smashed: smash the deadly weapon of the rapacious mortal.
10. To us listen well, Indra; to us mete out glittering prizes.
To us you impel all plentiful gifts. For us become a giver of cows, o bounteous one.
11. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.23 (319) Indra (1–7, 11), Indra or R̥ta (8–10)

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The most salient feature of this hymn is the insistent series of questions that dominate its first six verses. These questions all concern the sacrificers' relationship to Indra—which sacrificers have managed to attract and please Indra, how does Indra know who is sacrificing and where, who receives Indra's bounty and comradeship and by what means. A preliminary and oblique answer is given in the second half of verse 4: "the god will take cognizance of my truths," that is, my praise and sacred formulations, which will ensure that Indra will come to our sacrifice and share his bounty. This answer is elaborated upon in the last verses of the hymn. After this partial answer in verse 4 the questions take on a more intimate tone, inquiring into the nature of Indra's friendship with his worshipers, who are now his comrades, whereas the first four verses were more concerned with the mechanics of attracting Indra to our particular sacrifice. A striking feature of these question verses is that, despite the poet's eagerness for the presence and intimate comradeship of Indra, the god is always referred to in the 3rd person, and indeed the poet and sacrificers are almost always in the 3rd person as well. This 3rd-person distancing of Indra reminds us somewhat of the doubts expressed about Indra's existence or at least

his whereabouts in other Ṛgvedic hymns; the 3rd-person reference suggests that the poet has not established the direct personal contact with the god that he desires.

Verse 7 serves as a transition to the amplified answers of verses 8–10. In verse 7 Indra prepares to destroy "the lie," the deceit that is inimical to the proper functioning of the cosmos. After Indra's destruction of the lie, the ubiquitous and all-powerful force of "truth" can be celebrated in the remaining verses (8–10, before the refrain verse 11). These three verses contain twelve instances of the word *ṛtá* "truth," most of them initial in their pāda. As Paul Thieme illuminatingly pointed out (1964: 30), *ṛtá* is the implicit answer to the questions posed earlier—the "how?" questions answered with "by means of truth," the "which sacrificer?" questions by "the one who produces truth." And we already saw that *ṛtá* as the answer was foreshadowed in the middle of the hymn (vs. 4cd). Thus we can satisfactorily resolve the apparent lack of connection between the first two-thirds of the hymn, with its barrage of questions about Indra and the sacrifice, and the last third, with its insistently repeated "truth" and absolutely no mention of Indra, that led the Anukramaṇī to suggest the possibility of two different divinities for the hymn (Indra 1–7, 11; Ṛta 8–10). Indra by destroying the lie (vs. 7) gave free rein to the workings of truth described in verses 8–10.

1. How did he [=priest?] strengthen the great one [=Indra]? Enjoying the
   sacrifice of what Hotar—(coming) to the soma as to an udder,
   eager for, enjoying, and drinking the stalk—has he waxed high for the
   blazing stakes?
2. What hero has reached shared exhilaration with him? Who has attained
   it with his good favor?
   Has his bright (course) appeared? Will he be here with help for the
   strengthening of the one who has labored, eager to sacrifice?
3. How does Indra hear (the call) being called? How, hearing it, does he
   know (the place for) his unhitching?
   What are his many distributions (of goods)? How do they call him a
   provider for the singer?
4. How will the man who has zealously labored and produced insights
   attain the material goods that belong to him [=Indra]?
   The god will take cognizance of my truths, when he has accepted the
   homage that he will enjoy.
5. How and what comradeship with a mortal does the god enjoy at the
   breaking of this dawn?
   How and what is his comradeship for his comrades, who have tugged
   their well-harnessed desire to him?
6. Is his comradeship then a drinking vessel for his comrades? When will we
   proclaim his brotherhood to you?
   The surges (of soma?) for him are a marvel, lovely to see for their beauty.
   He seeks (the milk?) from the cow, very bright like the sun.

7. Desiring to smash the lie, which is injurious and contrary to Indra, he sharpens the edges sharp for jabbing,
after the powerful avenger of debts has also thrust our debts far away to unknown dawns.
8. Of truth there exist many riches. The vision of truth smashes the crooked,
and the signal call of truth bored open deaf ears—(the signal call) of Āyu [=Agni], awakening and blazing.
9. Of truth the buttresses are firmly fixed; many are its gleaming marvels to be marveled at.
By truth the nourishments urge themselves along the long way, and by truth the cows approached truth.
10. (Whoever) holds fast to truth, just he wins truth. The explosive force of truth hastens swiftly as it seeks cattle.
For truth the two (worlds) are wide, ample, and deep; for truth do they, as the two highest milk-cows, give their milk.
11. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.24 (320) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 10

For most of its length (vss. 1–7), this hymn expresses in vivid language the familiar notion of competing parties invoking Indra for help and offering him sacrificial oblations and praise in return. Verses 3–5 are especially focused on the desperate efforts of the human antagonists to enlist Indra's might on their own side. It is also clear that the offerings made by the successful supplicants must be made just so: in addition to soma, a whole sacrificial menu is specified, with a special emphasis on cooked foods (see esp. vss. 5, 7).

The last three verses (8–10, before the Vāmadeva refrain in 11) lay bare the mechanism of the divine–human bargain that lies behind the first part of the hymn, and indeed behind the whole Ṛgvedic enterprise more generally. Rather than casting the exchange relations between men and gods in the rosy light of mutual benefit and voluntary cooperation, the verses present the acquisition of Indra's aid by mortals as a matter of cold-blooded haggling and crass calculations of price versus value received. In our interpretation, Indra even has an agent, in the person of his own wife. These verses are difficult, enigmatic, and apparently use the lexicon and phraseology

of commercial transactions, a linguistic level barely attested elsewhere in Vedic. Consequently the meaning of the verses is much disputed, and we will provide here only our own interpretation (which follows Geldner's in many, but not all, ways).

In verse 8 Indra (or perhaps his wife, a possibility raised by Oldenberg and Geldner) takes a long hard look at the hostilities he's being asked to participate in, and his wife calls him back home, presumably to sit out the conflict or at least to hold out for a better offer. In fact, in verse 9 Indra reports on a failed bit of haggling. An unidentified party seems to have made a bad deal, offering a higher price for an inferior product, in this case probably the help of a god less powerful than Indra (9a). With Indra's own offer not accepted, he goes happily home "unsold" (9b), remarking that the other party did not seize his chance to replace the inferior product with a greater one, namely Indra himself (9c). He ends with what appears to be a maxim, mocking the negotiation prowess of the other party (9d). Verse 10, in our view (and ours alone?), is spoken by Indra's wife, hawking her husband and his obstacle-smashing talent and naming her price for his sale. The price, ten cows, seems very low for such a god (especially considering how many hundreds of cows are elsewhere given to mortal poets and priests, at least according to dānastutis), and so it is possible or even likely that this is a bitter and rhetorical question, complaining about the stinginess of mortal purchasers. In any case, it's a limited-term offer, as she expects Indra to be returned at the end of his mercenary service.

The allusion to dānastutis above was purposeful, for this little set of verses not only occupies the position of a dānastuti in this hymn, but also has the slangy and derisory tone of many dānastutis and the same recognition of the commercial underpinnings of the relationship between patron and client. It may even be that, using Indra's withdrawal as model, the poet is indirectly complaining about an ungenerous patron and threatening to withhold his poetic production unless he receives a better deal.

1. What good praise will turn Indra here—the son of strength, facing our way—for our benefit?
   For the hero is the giver of good things to the singer, and he is the herdsman of our tribute, o peoples.
2. He is to be summoned at the smashing of obstacles, he is to be invoked, and he is well praised—Indra, whose benefit is real.
   Here on his journey the bounteous one establishes wide space for the mortal soma-presser devoted to the sacred formulation.
3. Just to him do men separately call at the encounter. Having given up their bodies, they make him their preserver,
   when the men of both camps, on opposite sides, have come to abandon (their bodies) in the winning of offspring and descendants.
4. The settled peoples show their resolve at the hitching up (for battle), o powerful one, while they are gasping on opposite sides in the winning of the flood.

When the battling clans have rolled together, just then do those on the one side seek Indra at the moment of confrontation.

5. Just then do those on the other side perform sacrifice to his Indrian strength; just then would the cooked food succeed the offering cake;
just then would soma exclude the non-pressers; and just then does he [=Indra] find pleasure in the bull [=soma] for the sacrifice to proceed.
6. He [=Indra] makes wide space for the one who presses soma in just this way for Indra who is eager for it.
The man with fully focused mind who never loses the track—just him does he [=Indra] make his comrade in battles.
7. Whoever will press soma for Indra today, will cook the cooked foods, and will roast the grains—
upon him will Indra, gladly receiving the recitations of the zealous one, confer his bullish explosive force.
8. When the ballsy one surveyed the clash, when he looked upon the long (war)drive of the stranger,
his wife roared the bull (back) into the house, though he had been whetted sharp by the soma pressers.
9. [Indra:] "With a greater price he got a lesser deal. Unsold, I took pleasure in going (home) again.
He did not replace the lesser with a greater. Skimpy skills milk the bargain [?] dry."
10. [Indra's wife:] "Who buys this Indra of mine with ten cows,
when he's going to smash obstacles? Then will he return him to me again?"
11. – Now praised, o Indra, now being sung, make refreshment swell for the singer like rivers.
A new sacred formulation has been made for you, o you of the fallow bays. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

IV.25 (321) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Although this hymn is superficially organized like IV.23, with a series of questions in the first part of the hymn that are answered in the second part, it lacks the structural subtlety of IV.23, where the answers to the questions are implied, not stated, and the questions themselves are quite varied. In this hymn the first three verses pose a set of questions about the sacrificer, all but one (*kásya* "whose?" in vs. 3c) introduced by nominative *káḥ* "who?" The benefits that accrue to the sacrificer so

identified are detailed in most of the rest of the hymn (vss. 4–7), benefits highlighted by the corresponding ill fate of the non-presser and non-giver described in verses 6–7. The hymn ends (vs. 8) with a comprehensive list of all who call upon Indra.

A salient feature of this hymn is the focus on the various kinds of relationships a mortal may have with Indra: especially comradeship (vss. 1, 2, 6, 7), but also fellowship (literally yoke-fellowship, vs. 2), brotherhood (vs. 2), friendship (vs. 6), and kinship (vs. 6).

1. Who, a manly one with a desire for the god, eagerly enjoys the comradeship of Indra today?
   Or who, having his soma pressed when his fire has been kindled, reverently invokes him for his great and decisive help?
2. Who shows reverence with his speech to him deserving of soma, or becomes zealous at the breaking of the dawn?
   Who is eager for the fellowship of Indra, who for the comradeship, who for the brotherhood? Who (joins) together with his [=Indra's] help for the poet?
3. Who chooses the help of the gods today? Who reverently invokes the Ādityas and Aditi for light?
   Of whose pressed soma-plant do the Aśvins, Indra, and Agni drink without losing track in their mind?
4. For him will Agni, the fire of the Bhāratas, hold out shelter, and for a long time he will see the sun rising,
   who says, "Let us press soma for Indra"—for the manly man, for the best man of men.
5. The many do not overpower him, nor the few. Aditi will hold out wide shelter for him.
   Dear to Indra is the good performer (of sacrifice), dear the zealous man, dear the hard-striver, dear the provider of soma.
6. The swaggering victor, the hero—Indra—makes the cooked food of the hard-striver, the (soma-)presser, his own exclusive property.
   No friend of the non-presser, nor comrade, nor kinsman, he strikes down, deep down, the ill-strivers.
7. Indra does not agree to comradeship with a rich miser, nor does he, the drinker of pressed soma, (agree to it) with one who does not press.
   He rips away his possessions and smites him naked. He becomes manifest exclusively to the presser, for his cooked food.
8. Indra do they call—those higher, those lower, and those in the middle; Indra those travelling and Indra those settled down;
   Indra those dwelling peacefully and those fighting; Indra superior men competing for the prize.

IV.26 (322) Indra (1–3), Praise of Falcon (4–7) [Soma-Theft]

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The next two hymns treat the famous myth of the theft of Soma from heaven. Soma was being held captive in a well-fortified citadel there, guarded by an archer named Kr̥śānu. A falcon carried him off by stealth, and though shot at by Kr̥śānu, the bird only lost a single feather (a tale told more fully in several Brāhmaṇa accounts). Delivered to Manu, the first sacrificer, the soma was then available to be ritually prepared for Indra, who cannot perform his great deeds without it.

The first of the two hymns is entirely couched as the speech of Indra (in our view, though the Anukramaṇī assigns at least vss. 4–7 to the poet Vāmadeva and takes the first three verses either as Vāmadeva's speech [impersonating Indra] or as Indra's himself). It begins (vss. 1–3) as a standard Indra ātmastuti (self-praise), with 1st-person boasting about his deeds and identities; see, for example, X.48–49. (On the ātmastuti in general, see Thompson 1997.) In verse 4 he addresses his usual warrior band, the Maruts, with a laud of the falcon as the best of birds because of his soma-stealing exploit, which he then narrates in overlapping sequence (focusing on the central deed, "he brought [the soma]") in the remaining three verses (5–7). The last half of verse 7 alludes glancingly to the associated departure of the shadowy figure Plenitude, the personification (or rather deification) of plenty, a frequent companion of Soma's, presumably because of the association of the distribution of gifts with the performance of the Soma Sacrifice, especially the Morning Pressing. Judging from verse 7 in this hymn and verses 2–3 in the next one, Plenitude probably was carried away from heaven at the same time as Soma—though the poet expresses some doubts in IV.27.3.

1. I became Manu and the sun. I am Kakṣīvant, the inspired seer.
   I steered myself down to Kutsa, the son of Arjuna. I am Kavi Uśanā.
      Look at me!
2. I gave land to the Ārya; I (gave) rain to the pious mortal.
   I led the bellowing waters. It is my will that the gods followed.
3. I, in my exhilaration, broke apart all at once the nine and ninety
      fortresses of Śambara,
   and the hundredth, his dwelling place, to complete it, when I helped
      Divodāsa Atithigva.
4. Let that bird stand out from (all other) birds, o Maruts, the swift-flying
      falcon from (all other) falcons,
   because the fine-feathered one, with his independent power that needed
      no (chariot-)wheel, brought to Manu the oblation that is pleasing to
      the gods.
5. When he brought it from there, quivering (in fear), the bird, swift as
      thought, was sent surging along the wide path.

He traveled swiftly with the somian honey, and the falcon found fame here.

6. Flying straight, the falcon, the bird, hanging onto the plant, brought from afar the gladdening, exhilarating drink,
   the soma, holding it firmly, having the gods on his side, having taken it from yonder high heaven.
7. Having taken it, the falcon brought the soma, a thousand pressings and ten thousand all at once.
   Plenitude left behind the hostilities then, (as) in the exhilaration of soma the non-fool (leaves behind) fools.

IV.27 (323) Falcon (1–4), Falcon or Indra (5) [Soma-Theft]

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 5

The second of the pair of hymns devoted to the soma-theft, this one is told from Soma's point of view, with Soma speaking the first two verses (again, in our opinion), in which Soma engages in some ātmastuti of his own. He boasts of his own knowledge (vs. 1ab) and power (vs. 2ab), but also in almost breathlessly abrupt fashion relates the sudden appearance of the falcon, his rescuer (vs. 1d) from confinement (vs. 1b). Asserting that he was complicit in his escape (vs. 2ab), he then describes their departure, including that of Plenitude (see the introduction to the last hymn).

The next two verses (3–4) freeze the dramatic moment when the archer Kr̥śānu, guardian of Soma, shoots at the fleeing falcon with his precious cargo, and manages only to shoot off one feather. The final verse (5) depicts Indra about to drink the soma, now ritually prepared and offered by the priests. In keeping with the archery theme, the verb used of Indra's approach to the soma is an idiom (*práti* √*dhā*) ordinarily used of fixing an arrow to a bowstring and aiming it at the target.

1. [Soma:] Even though still in the womb, I knew all their births through and through—those of the gods—
   but a hundred metal fortifications guarded me. Then the falcon!—and swiftly I flew away.
2. [Soma:] He certainly did not carry me away against my will; I was superior to him in energy and valor.
   Plenitude left behind the hostilities (which were just standing) still, and (the falcon), swelling with strength, overtook the winds.
3. When the falcon then roared down from heaven, when—or if—they carried Plenitude away from there,
   when the archer Kr̥śānu, alert in mind, released and let fly his bow-string down toward him,

4. Flying straight, the falcon brought him to the companions of Indra from the lofty back (of heaven), just as (the Aśvins brought) Bhujyu (home, with their birds).
   A feather *of the winged one, of the bird launched then on its course, flew between (heaven and earth).
5. Now then the gleaming tub anointed with cows [=milk], the swelling, glistening stalk,
   the foremost of the honeyed drink held out by the Adhvaryus—
   bounteous Indra will aim it for drinking—
   the champion will aim it for drinking to exhilaration.

IV.28 (324) Indra, or Indra and Soma

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

After the preceding two hymns devoted to the theft of soma and the preparation and offering of this ritual drink to Indra, this hymn shows the results, celebrating the great martial deeds that Indra was capable of, once he had acquired the soma. Indeed, Soma is presented as the equal partner of Indra in the performance of these deeds. The deeds themselves are the familiar ones: the slaying of Vṛtra in order to free the waters (vs. 1), the tearing off of the Sun's wheel with the Śuṣṇa saga obliquely alluded to (vs. 2), the destruction of earthly foes (vss. 3–4), and the opening of the Vala cave (vs. 5). The hymn is marked by a clever bit of ring composition: the waters freed from Vṛtra's imprisonment are as if "covered over" (*ápihitā*) in verse 1, while the same adjective "covered over" is found also in verse 5 (*ápihitāni*), where it refers both to those waters and to the cows freed from the Vala cave—thus suggesting the deep-structure similarity of those two myths.

1. With you as yokemate, o Soma, and in partnership with you, Indra made the waters flow for Manu.
   He smashed the serpent; he let the seven rivers stream. He opened them up, like holes that had been covered over.
2. With you as yokemate, o drop, Indra with his strength in a single day tore down the wheel of the Sun,
   which was rolling along the lofty back (of heaven). A whole lifetime of great deceit was set aside.
3. Indra smashed and Agni burned the Dasyus before midday at the moment of confrontation, o drop.
   With his missile he laid low many thousands of them, who were travelling to the house of no exit [=grave] as if by their own intention.
4. O Indra, you made the Dasyus the lowest of all and the Dāsa clans deprived of laud.

You two oppressed and crushed down your rivals and found requital with your deadly weapons.

5. In just this way (did it come) true, o bounteous ones: you two, o Indra and Soma, kept pounding the horse-pen and that of the cow;
   you gave leave to the things that were covered with the stone [=waters/cows] (to flow), having drilled through even the places of the earth.

IV.29 (325) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

A fairly straightforward invitation and journey hymn. Indra is urged to drive to our sacrifice, ignoring rival pressers, to drink soma jointly with us, and, as usual, to provide us with help and with wealth.

1. Praised, o Indra, with your fallow bays drive here right up to us, with prizes and with help, to find exhilaration for yourself;
   (drive) even across the many pressings of the stranger, being hymned by songs, as one whose benefit is real.
2. For the manly one, ever attentive, drives here, when being called by the pressers to the sacrifice—
   he who, with his good horses, thinking himself non-frightening, becomes exhilarated along with the heroes who have pressed the soma.
3. Cause his ears to hear—to rouse him, to make him reach exhilaration following our pleasing instruction.
   Boiling up and over for our benefit, powerful Indra will make fearlessness and good fords for us.
4. He who will come here with his help to a man in distress, to an inspired poet who calls and hymns just so—
   the mace-bearer putting his swift (horses) to the chariot-pole in person—hundreds and thousands (of them).
5. Aided by you, bounteous Indra, might we—inspired poets and patrons—hymning (you) be yours,
   for your giving of desirable (wealth) consisting of much livestock, as we receive our share of the wealth coming from lofty heaven.

IV.30 (326) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
24 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 8, 24, arranged in tr̥cas

This long hymn, constructed of triplets, begins with a celebration of Indra's supreme power (vss. 1–3) and ends with a summary of the same (vss. 22–23, with

24 a pendant). In between lies a catalogue of many of Indra's famous, and not so famous, deeds—though avoiding the most famous of these, the Vala and Vr̥tra myths (save in the repeated epithet "Vr̥tra-smasher," vss. 1, 19, 22). The most detailed treatments are of Indra's theft of the Sun's wheel (vss. 4–6) and the smashing of Dawn's cart (vss. 8–11), myths whose contents are not entirely clear to us, despite regular allusions to them. Both myths are also treated in X.138, and as in that hymn (see introductory remarks there), we see in both myths a reflection of Indra's assertion of control over cosmic time by deregulating it, at least temporarily. This theme seems to be announced in verse 3c, immediately preceding the story of the Sun's wheel.

The other deeds are related in cursory fashion, one per verse, and the abundance of forms of *utá* "and" emphasizes the additive nature of the hymn, especially in its second part. In this it resembles the catalogue hymns devoted to the Aśvins' rescues and favors to men.

1. There is no one higher than you, Indra, and no one superior, o Vr̥tra-smasher—
   no one who is exactly as you are.
2. Altogether do the peoples turn, like wheels, following all things that are yours.
   Altogether are you famed as great.
3. Not even all the gods (altogether) fought you, Indra, because of this:
   that by night you passed over the days.

4. When, for those hard pressed and for Kutsa as he fought,
   you stole the wheel from the Sun, o Indra;
5. When you fought the swaggering gods, all of them, even though you were alone,
   and you smashed the rapacious ones, o Indra;
6. And when for the mortal you let the Sun slip,
   and you helped Etaśa through your powers.

7. And after that are you (still) the one best possessed of battle fury, o bounteous smasher of obstacles?
   At that time you passed over Dānu (lying there),
8. And you performed this manly and masculine deed, Indra:
   that you smote a woman, the evilly angry daughter of Heaven.
9. The daughter of Heaven: though she was honored as great, you, the great,
   crushed Dawn completely.

10. Dawn ran away in fear from her cart, which was completely crushed,
    when the bull jabbed it down.
11. This cart of hers lies, very completely crushed, here at the Vipāś (River).
    She has run into the far distance.

12. And the River Vibālī, which had spread out upon the earth,
 did you hem in, Indra, by your magic power.

13. And you boldly seized the possessions of Śuṣṇa,
 when you completely crushed his fortresses.
14. And you struck Śambara, the Dāsa son of Kulitara,
 down from the lofty mountain, Indra.
15. And you smote the hundreds and thousands (of men) of the Dāsa Varcin,
 and five in addition, like the outer parts of wheels.

16. And to this unwed girl's son, who had been shunned, did Indra of a hundred resolves
 give a share in the recitations.
17. And these two, Turvaśa and Yadu, who could not swim, did the lord of powers,
 the knowing Indra, bring to the far shore.
18. And these two Āryas, Arṇa and Citraratha, did you strike at the same time
 to the far side of the Sarayu (River), o Indra.

19. You led along the two that had been abandoned, the blind man and the lame, o Vṛtra-smasher:
 that favor of yours is not to be equaled.
20. Indra threw open the hundred fortresses made of stone
 for the pious Divodāsa.
21. For Dabhīti, Indra "put to sleep" with his blows thirty thousand
 Dāsas by his magic power.

22. And you are that same herdsman, o Indra, Vṛtra-smasher,
 who set all these things in motion.
23. And now what masculine deed worthy of Indra you *will* do, o Indra,
 that no one shall thwart today.
24. Let the god Aryaman give everything of value to you, o Āduri—
 Pūṣan a valuable, Bhaga a valuable, the gap-toothed god a valuable.

IV.31 (327) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
15 verses: gāyatrī, probably arranged in tṛcas

Indra's help to us, in its manifold varieties, is a major subject in the hymn, which opens with a question about this help and regularly returns to the topic (vss. 3, 10, 12, 13). Because Indra's presence is required in order for us to receive his help,

the hymn is also framed as a journey/invitation hymn. The second verse asks which soma drink will most appeal to Indra, a semi-disguised expression of the usual worry that Indra will be attracted by rival pressers. This worry seems also to underlie the difficult second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6), with its condensed phraseology. Here the poet first calls on Indra to come here (vs. 4), then seems (in our interpretation at least) to chide him slightly for tarrying (vs. 5), but finally announces (vs. 6) that Indra has arrived with both high spirits and equipment. (The references to the sun in vss. 5 and 6 are opaque, but we tentatively suggest that they refer to the early-morning soma sacrifice.) In the next tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) the poet seems reassured: despite Indra's wide-ranging travels his generosity never flags and nothing gets in its way.

In contrast to the middle verses 4–9, the last two tr̥cas (vss. 10–15) are quite straightforward and characterized by the insistent fronting of the pronoun "us/our," which opens every verse, as well as several intermediate pādas (10bc, 12c). The message is simple: help us and give to us in every way possible, ending with a wish for fame among the gods, fame higher than heaven itself (vs. 15).

1. With what help will our brilliant, ever-strengthening comrade be there
   for us—
   with what most powerful troop?
2. Which trusty one among the exhilarating drinks, which most bounteous
   one from the soma-stalk will exhilarate you
   to break loose good things, even though they are held fast?
3. As the helper of us, your comrades and your singers,
   you will prevail by your hundred means of help.

4. Turn toward us here—like a chariot-wheel turned toward its steeds—
   with your teams of the separate peoples.
5. For through the days you come here along the slope of your intentions,
   as if by foot.
   I have taken my share in company with the sun(rise).
6. Since your battle-frenzies, o Indra, since your chariot-wheels have
   converged (here),
   (I have taken my share) sometimes in (company with) you and sometimes
   in (company with) the Sun.

7. And because it is just you they always call a bounteous one, o lord
   of power,
   a giver who never thinks twice,
8. And (you) always (circle) around (the peoples? realms?) in a single day;
   on the laboring presser
   you bounteously bestow many goods.
9. For not even a hundred hindrances can block your generosity,
   nor your exploits when you will do them.

10. Let your hundred means of help help us, us your thousand,
    us all your superior powers.
11. Choose us here for comradeship, for well-being,
    for great, heavenly wealth.
12. Help us through all the days with wealth in profusion, o Indra—
    us with all your means of help.

13. For us open up these pens filled with cattle, as a sharpshooter (would),
    with your new means of help, o Indra.
14. Our brilliant chariot, not to be diverted, boldly
    speeds in its search for cattle and horses, o Indra.
15. Our fame—make it most preeminent among the gods, o Sun,
    and highest, as if above heaven.

IV.32 (328) Indra

Vāmadeva Gautama
24 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This long final hymn of the Indra cycle of Maṇḍala IV is, in contrast to the earlier hymns in this cycle, quite straightforward for most of its length. The poet urges Indra to come to us, with help and gifts, and promises praises of his great deeds (though the celebration of his specific deeds within the hymn is cursory—consisting of part of vs. 10) and oblations.

Toward the end of the hymn, the requests for gifts become specific (esp. the tr̥ca of vss. 17–19) and somewhat peremptory (see esp. vs. 20). These verses (17–21) have the "feel" of a dānastuti, though they are without doubt addressed to Indra. The real dānastuti occupies the last tr̥ca (vss. 22–24), though the praise of Indra's gifts in the preceding verses obviously serves as model for the human patron. These last three verses, and especially the middle verse 23, are quite opaque and, like many dānastutis, contain slangy expressions and words belonging to a different, and lower, linguistic register. All three verses praise "the two brown ones," and the first of the verses announces itself as a formal praśasti (panegyric), with the verbal lexeme *prá … śáṃsāmi*. The referent of the two brown ones is unclear. The default assumption is horses, but the very peculiar verse 23 casts considerable doubt on this interpretation. We will not rehearse here the many strained interpretations of verse 23 (among which are some that concern puppets, some eyeballs) and simply provide our own. We suggest that the "two brown ones" are the two breasts of a woman given to the poet as a gift (along with cows and the like). (For what we take as similar praise of a gift-woman's breasts in a dānastuti, see VIII.2.42.) In verse 23 the poet compares the now-bared breasts to dolls on a post (the slender trunk of the woman, presumably), and the travels he refers to in verses 23–24 are, in our interpretation, their movements during sex. Although this interpretation is not entirely

secure, the competing interpretations are even less so, and the prurient nature of our suggested contents would fit the marked linguistic register of the dānastuti.

1. Come here to us, o Indra Vṛtra-smasher, here to our side,
as the great one with great means of help.
2. You are a whirlwind, constantly lunging. O brilliant one, you put the brilliance
in the brilliant (females [=means of help?]) right here, for our help.
3. With only a few you smash the more numerous overweening (force) with your power,
with the comrades who are in company with you.

4. We in company with you, Indra—we keep bellowing to you:
"Help us, only us!"
5. Come here to us, o master of the stone, with your brilliant means of help,
which cannot be faulted or challenged.
6. Might we be comrades of one like you, Indra, possessed of cows,
and be your yokemates for the sake of the thrilling prize.

7. Since you alone, Indra, are master of the prize possessed of cows,
offer us great refreshment.
8. They cannot deflect you to another way, when, praised, you wish to give bounty
to the praisers, o Indra longing for songs.
9. The Gotamas have bellowed to you with their song, for you to give
the thrilling prize, Indra.

10. We shall proclaim your heroic deeds: that you in your exhilaration broke into
the Dāsa fortresses, after having attacked them.
11. The ritual masters sing these deeds of yours—the manly deeds that you performed—
at their pressings, o Indra longing for songs.
12. The Gotamas, whose vehicle is praise, have become strengthened in your company, Indra.
On them confer glory in heroes.

13. Even though you are the support common to each and every one, Indra,
we summon you to us.
14. Become inclined toward us, o good one. Among us achieve exhilaration from the stalk,
o Indra, soma-drinker of the soma-juices.
15. Let the praise song of our thoughts guide you here, Indra.
Turn your two fallow bays this way.

16. Our offering cake you shall eat, and you shall take pleasure in
    our songs,
    as a bride-seeking man does a maiden.
17. We beg Indra for a thousand paired horses in harness,
    for a hundred measures of soma.
18. Let us get hundreds and thousands of your cows driven here.
    Let your largesse come among us.

19. We have acquired ten tubs of golden (goods).
    You are the giver of much, o Vr̥tra-smasher.
20. O giver of much, give much to us. Not a little!—bring much here.
    Surely it is much that you want to give, o Indra.
21. Since you are famed in many places as the giver of much, o champion,
    Vr̥tra-smasher,
    give us a share in your largesse.

22. I solemnly proclaim the two brown ones of yours, o far-gazing
    grandson of the Goṣan.
    (But) with (the gift of) these two, don't slack off on (the giving of) cows!
23. Like two little baby-dolls on a post—the two new little ones,
    undressed—
    the two brown ones go in beauty on their travels.
24. Ready for me when I travel at dawn, ready (for me) when I don't,
    the two brown ones don't falter on their travels.

IV.33 (329) R̥bhus

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the most interesting of the R̥bhu hymns and one of the most significant for the interpretation of the R̥bhus. The R̥bhus are gods, but they are also priests, and much of the hymn refers to their work as sacrificial performers in the third soma pressing, the pressing with which they are associated (cf. vs. 11). This sacrificial work is sometimes directly expressed (e.g., vss. 2ab, 3cd, 9), but most often it is described in mythic narrative. For example, while verse 4 has been controversial, it likely refers to a distinctive rite of the Third Pressing in which the soma stalks already used in the first two pressings are beaten again to extract the soma juice for the Third Pressing. The "cow" that one R̥bhu tends is the soma stalks, which are thoroughly mangled or "carved" in the pressing and then "carried" away. Because the R̥bhus prepared the soma or perhaps even created the Third Pressing, they "attained immortality" and became gods. This leaves unexplained the verse's

repeated reference to the "year," but perhaps the year represents the sacrificial day or even the period of the Third Pressing.

The next verses (5–6) describe the institution of the Third Pressing. The principal soma recipients in the Third Pressing are Indra and the three R̥bhus. The four soma cups that the R̥bhus construct from the one made by Tvaṣṭar thus represent the four soma recipients and the extension of the soma rite into the Third Pressing. Unfortunately, the narrative returns to deeper obscurity in verse 7. The story of the R̥bhus and Agohya occurs in other R̥bhu hymns (I.110.2–3 and 161.11–12), but none of the hymns provides enough information to know who Agohya is or the significance of the R̥bhus' slumber in the house of Agohya. If there is a ritual reference here, it may be to an Atirātra or overnight soma rite, in which the Third Pressing is extended through the night into the next day. If that is the case, then the poet could be conflating different units of time as in verse 4, and the "twelve days" they remained with Agohya could be the hours of the night. One possibility is that Agohya is Savitar (cf. I.110.2–3), and that identification too would point to the night since Savitar is associated with the night. In verse 8 the "smooth running" chariot that stands still may be the sacrifice, elsewhere compared to a chariot, but the "all-rousing milk-cow of all shapes" remains elusive.

Although there is significant competition for this honor, perhaps the most obscure of the stories is that of the R̥bhus' rejuvenation of their parents (vss. 2–3ab). Their parents could be the sacrificer and his wife, who has an important ritual role in the Third Pressing and whose sexual power is a theme of that pressing. Or they could even be the two Aśvins, who in the classical soma rite are invoked in the morning following an overnight soma rite. The word *pitárā,* though understood here and usually as an elliptical dual referring to father and mother, can mean "two fathers," perhaps an oblique reference to the Aśvins. The Aśvins are part of the Morning Pressing and their reappearance at the end of the rite could constitute a kind of rejuvenation.

The difficulties in the interpretation of the narratives in this hymn are reflected in some of the language of the hymns, especially at its beginning and end. The first verse imitates the clever artisanship of the R̥bhus by its own verbal intricacy. In pāda c the phrase *táráṇibhir évaiḥ* could be translated "along their transiting ways" and mean that the R̥bhus move actually or figuratively along the courses that cross heaven. But *taráṇi* can also mean "surpassing," and therefore the phrase might also refer to the "surpassing" ritual skill of the R̥bhus by which they encompass heaven. With equal justification, therefore, we could translate "(The R̥bhus,) sped by the wind, by their surpassing ways have encompassed heaven. . . ." Pāda b interrupts and separates pāda a from cd, which continue it. In pāda b it is not clear what the "*śvaitarī* cow" is—it could be a kind of cow as Geldner suggests—but *śvaítarī* carries or suggests the sense of "gleaming white" and points to the identification of the cow as milk. If the priest has just drunk it, milk might form an underlayer of his speech, which he then offers to the gods. The infinitive *upastíre* "to spread an underlayer" evokes the upastáraṇa, the underlayer of butter that accompanies a puroḍāśá or barley cake offering.

The last verse has a different kind of complexity. Pāda b begins *ná ṛté śrāntásya*, and the problem particularly involves the word *ṛté*. The simplest and most common reading is to translate *ṛté* as "except," but it would then normally govern an ablative noun and there is none to be had. Our suggestion is that there is an ellipsis of an ablative *sakhyā́t* "companionship." But further, we also suggest that *ṛté* is a śleṣa, a pun, and means not only "except," but also "in the truth," that is, "according to the proper order of the sacrifice." In this sense the word is construed with *śrāntá* "labored." To try to capture the double meaning, we have translated the word twice in these two senses.

1. To the Ṛbhus I send forth my speech like a messenger—I call upon the
   śvaitarī milk-cow to spread an underlayer (for it)—
   to the artisans who, sped by the wind along their transiting ways, have
   encompassed heaven in a day.
2. When the Ṛbhus made fit preparations for their parents by their
   attentiveness, industry, and wondrous skills,
   right then they came into companionship with the gods. Clever, they
   brought prosperity to their zeal.
3. They who made their parents, lying aged like two old posts,
   youths again—
   let them—Vāja, Vibhvan, and Ṛbhu together with Indra—delighting in
   the honeyed (soma), help our sacrifice.
4. When the Ṛbhus guarded the cow through the year, when the Ṛbhus
   carved the meat through the year,
   when they carried her leavings through the year, they attained
   immortality by these labors.
5. The eldest said, "I will make two cups (from one)." The younger said,
   "We will make three."
   The youngest said, "I will make four." O Ṛbhus, Tvaṣṭar wondered at
   that speech of yours.
6. The noble men spoke the truth, for they did exactly that. According to
   their will, the Ṛbhus followed that (will of theirs).
   Having seen the four cups, Tvaṣṭar gazed at them, bright shining
   like days.
7. When the Ṛbhus enjoyed the hospitality of Agohya for twelve days,
   sleeping (there),
   (then) they made the fields good and led the rivers; plants arose upon the
   dry land and waters upon the low ground.
8. Who made the chariot smooth running and standing still for men, who
   (made) the all-rousing milk-cow of all shapes—
   let these Ṛbhus fashion wealth for us, they of good help, good work, and
   good hands.
9. Because the gods were pleased at their work, reflecting on it according to
   their purpose and with their thought,

Vāja became the doer of right action for the gods, R̥bhukṣan for Indra, and Vibhvan for Varuṇa.

10. They who by their wisdom, finding exhilaration in the hymns, made the two fallow bays for Indra, they who made his easily hitched horses—
you!—establish for us possessions and the prospering of wealth. Establish an alliance (with us), R̥bhus, like those dwelling in peace.

11. At this time of the day they have established drink and exhilaration for you. The gods are not in companionship (with men) except (for their companionship) with him who has labored in the truth.
Now, o R̥bhus, establish good things for us at this Third Pressing.

IV.34 (330) R̥bhus

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is built upon an urgent appeal that the R̥bhus and Indra reward and prosper the sacrificers. That desire is expressed especially in the repetitions of the noun *ratnadhéya* "the conferring of treasure" and adjective *ratnadhá/-dhā́* "conferring treasure." *Ratnadhéya* (1b, 4a, 11d) occurs in the first and last verses and thereby frames the hymn; *ratnadhá/-dhā́* (6d, 7d, 8d) is in the opening verses of the second half of the hymn. This repetition is amplified by the closely related phrases *rayíṃ* √*dhā* "confer riches" (10b) and *rātíṃ* √*dhā* "confer a gift" (10d), in the final verse before the extra-hymnic concluding verse 11.

Such word and sound repetition is a broader strategy of this poet. So pādas 5a, 5c, and 6a all begin with *ā́* "here" and their following pādas open with an *m*-sound and repeat nasals, while using relatively few stops: 5b *mahó naro dráviṇaso gr̥ṇānā́ḥ*, 5d *imā́ ástaṃ navasvà iva gman*, 6b *imáṃ yajñáṃ námasā hūyámānāḥ*. The result is a humming sound reminiscent of stotra chants in the classical Vedic rite. Then 6c, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 8c, and 8d begin with forms of *sajóṣas* "together" to emphasize the collectivity of gods who receive the soma. And finally, in a mirroring of verses 5–6, pādas 9a, 9c, and 10a begin with *yé* "who."

Implicit in the hymn is an insistence that the R̥bhus, even if they were once mortals, are now gods, able to bestow gifts on the sacrificers. Verse 3 defines their dual status as divine recipients of soma and as priests who offered soma. The sacrifice belongs to them, for as priests "like Manu" they long ago offered the sacrifice, but they also received it as gods. They are called *sūrí* "patrons" (6c), a term that can apply to sacrificers or to gods who reward the priests of the sacrifice. In 11cd the R̥bhus are invoked to receive the soma together with unnamed kings, who again could be divine or human. But the poet places particular emphasis on their divinity. The linking of the R̥bhus with Indra, especially at the beginning and end of the hymn (1a, 5a, 6c, 11c), more than just names the principal divine recipients at the Third Pressing; it also

reaffirms the divinity of the R̥bhus through their close relationship to Indra. In verses 7–8 the poet directly addresses Indra and invites him to drink the soma together with many of the other deities who receive offerings at the soma pressings, and then adds the R̥bhus (8b) to his address and to these divinities. The poet even creates an icon of their achievement of divinity. The one time in this hymn that they are directly called gods is the very last word of the last verse, which forms a climax to the hymn.

One final note: at the beginning of the hymn, the poet names the three R̥bhus: R̥bhu, Vibhvan, and Vāja. Normally, the three together are called R̥bhus, of course, but elsewhere and here they can also be invoked by elliptical plurals of either of the other two names. In this hymn they are called Vājas in successive verses (3d, 4c, and 5a), an address likely inspired by the epithet *vā́jaratna* "whose treasure is victory's prize" in verse 2. In 9d they are called Vibhūs, obviously patterning with Vibhvan. In the first half of verse 9 the poet associates the name "R̥bhu" with the gods' typical deeds: they created a chariot for the Aśvins, rejuvenated their parents, and fashioned a cow and two horses. As noted before, most of these deeds refer to priestly action, since the chariot can be the sacrifice, the parents either the Aśvins themselves or the sacrificer and his wife, the cow the soma stalks, and the two horses the horses that bring Indra to the sacrificial area. In 9cd the poet uses the name "Vibhū" (or the form may be "Vibhu") and the deeds he describes are more unusual. The R̥bhus do not elsewhere make armor, so the significance of this story is obscure. The other two deeds echo the plea for prosperity. As Geldner has noted, Yāska understands *ŕ̥dhak* both in the sense of "separate" (*pr̥thak*) and "prospering" (*r̥dhnuvan*). The first is the proper meaning of *ŕ̥dhak*, but if the second is suggested by the word's similarity to √*r̥dh* "prosper," then the verse implies that the Vibhūs both create and prosper the sacrificer's world.

1. Let R̥bhu, Vibhvan, Vāja, and Indra travel here toward this our sacrifice
   and toward their conferring of treasure (here),
   for at this time of the day [=evening] the goddess Holy Place has placed
   the drink (of soma) for you. The exhilarating draughts have gathered
   for you.
2. And knowing of your origin, o you whose treasure is victory's prize, find
   exhilaration according to the ritual sequences, o R̥bhus.
   The exhilarating draughts have gathered for you, (as has) Plenitude. Send
   here a wealth of good heroes for us.
3. R̥bhus, this sacrifice now has been made for you, which you, like Manu,
   established for yourselves from of old.
   Those (draughts of soma), giving pleasure, have come forth for you here,
   and you all have come to the fore (to receive them), o Vājas.
4. Now there has come to be the conferring of treasure for him honoring
   you, for the pious mortal, o fine men.
   Drink, o Vājas, o R̥bhus! The great Third Pressing has been given to you
   for your exhilaration.

5. Travel here toward us, o Vājas, o Master of the R̥bhus [=Indra] and R̥bhus, o you fine men of great possessions, since you are being sung (by us).
   These (soma-)draughts have come here for you in the evening of the day, as newly calved (cows come) home.
6. O children of strength, travel here toward this sacrifice, being summoned with reverence.
   Together, o patrons and (the one) to whom you belong [=Indra], drink of the honey [=soma] along with Indra, as those who confer treasure.
7. Together with Varuṇa, o Indra, (drink) the soma. Together with the Maruts, drink the soma, o you longing for the songs.
   With those drinking first, with those drinking in ritual sequence, (drink) together; with the Wives (of the Gods) conferring treasure, (drink) together.
8. Together with the Ādityas become exhilarated; o R̥bhus, together with the mountains;
   together with the divine Savitar; together with the rivers, conferring treasure.
9. The R̥bhus, who (did for) the two Aśvins and who (did for) their parents, who fashioned the cow through their help, who the two horses;
   the Vibhūs, who (made) the armor (of the gods?), who (made) the two world-halves to be separated, and who have done (the deeds) bringing good descendants,
10. You who confer riches abundant in cattle, in prizes of victory, in good heroes, in goods, and in much livestock—
    o R̥bhus, as those drinking first and finding exhilaration, confer your gift on us and (on those) who sing of it.
11. You have not kept away. We have not let you be thirsty, o R̥bhus, nor are you unpraised in this sacrifice.
    You become exhilarated along with Indra, along with the Maruts, and along with kings for the sake of your conferring of wealth, o gods.

IV.35 (331) R̥bhus

Vāmadeva Gautama
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins by addressing the R̥bhus with a patronymic Saudhanvan "sons of Sudhanvan." This use of the patronymic and thus the emphasis on their birth accents their original humanity. But through their ritual work, they "went along the path of immortality" and so entered the community of gods (3cd). The poet

returns to this theme also at the end of the hymn in verse 8. He states that the Ṛbhus became gods through their work (8a) and recalls that they were human—once again through addressing them with their patronymic—before they became immortal (8d). The concluding verse then invites the divine Ṛbhus together with Indra to receive the soma at the Third Pressing.

In the middle section of the hymn the poet mentions several of the Ṛbhus' great deeds (vs. 5), but his focus is on their act of dividing one soma cup into four (vss. 2–4). According to this hymn, Indra alone is the recipient of soma in the Midday Pressing, but Indra and the three Ṛbhus are the principal soma recipients in the evening (vs. 7). The creation of four cups from one thus marks the transition from the single soma offering to Indra at midday to the four offerings in the evening and the institution of the Third Pressing.

1. Travel here, children of strength! Do not keep away, o Ṛbhus, sons of Sudhanvan,
   for in this pressing the conferring of treasure is yours. Let your exhilarating draughts follow after Indra.
2. The Ṛbhus' conferring of treasure has come here; the drinking of well-pressed soma has become (yours),
   since by your good work and your good labor you divided the single cup fourfold.
3. You divided the cup fourfold; you said, "O companion, work to cut it apart!"
   Then, o Vājas, you went along the path of the immortality to the throng of gods, o Ṛbhus of skilled hands.
4. Of what was this cup made, which you divided into four by your artistry?
   Now then press the soma-pressing for your exhilaration; drink of the soma-honey, o Ṛbhus!
5. By your ability you have made your parents to be young; by your ability you have made the cup from which the gods drink.
   By your ability you fashioned the two swift-running fallow bays that convey Indra, o Ṛbhus whose treasure is victory's prize.
6. Who presses for you in the evening of the day the sharp pressing for exhilaration, o Vājas,
   for him, o Ṛbhus, fashion wealth that consist of hale heroes since you find exhilaration, o bulls.
7. In the early morning you drank the pressed soma, o you with the fallow bays [=Indra]; the Midday Pressing is yours alone.
   Drink together with the treasure-conferring Ṛbhus, whom you made your companions by their good work.
8. You who became gods by your good work—settle down upon heaven like falcons!
   Confer treasure, o children of strength! O sons of Sudhanvan, you became immortal.

9. The Third Pressing, the conferring of treasure, which you made by your good labor, o you of skillful hands,
   that is poured all around here for you, o R̥bhus. Drink it along with the exhilarating draughts belonging to Indra!

IV.36 (332) R̥bhus

Vāmadeva Gautama
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The first half of this hymn turns on the "proclamation" of the divinity of the R̥bhus and of their deeds (vss. 1, 3, 5) and the second on the prosperity they bring. The first verse already establishes the central themes of the hymn. The chariot with three wheels that rolls through space is likely the ritual with its three fires or possibly with its three soma-pressings. And just as the ritual flies from earth to heaven, so the R̥bhus prosper both earth and heaven.

The ritual is key to the R̥bhus, since it is through their ritual acts that they became divine, and they continue to perform ritual acts, even as divinities. Verse 2 again refers to their perfect chariot—the perfect ritual that the R̥bhus carried out through their insight. Because they rode to heaven on that ritual, they are now offered soma at the Third Pressing (2cd). Verses 3–4 rehearse three of the well-known deeds of the R̥bhus, which are united by a sonic repetition: they rejuvenate their parents in order for them "to keep going" (*caráthāya*); in order to make the four principal soma offerings at the Third Pressing they "divided" one "cup into four" (*ví cakra camasáṃ cáturvayam*); and "out of a cowhide" (*cármaṇaḥ*) they made a milk-giving cow. The cowhide in 4b may be a hide on which the stalks of the soma plant are beaten (the *adhiṣavaṇacarman*) to produce the soma juice. Since at the Third Pressing the stalks used in the first two pressings are beaten again to extract the soma juice, therefore the great deed of the R̥bhus might have been that they were able to extract more soma juice on the cowhide from old stalks and in that way make the cowhide into a cow once again, who gives soma as its milk. Or the cowhide may refer to the soma stalks themselves, the shredded remains of the previous pressings that are made to yield soma once again.

In the second half of the hymn (vss. 5–9) the poet turns principally to the rewards that the R̥bhus bring. The poet announces the theme in verse 5 by proclaiming that those whom the R̥bhus help have "wide boundaries"—broad horizons, we might say. Great men, whether poets or warriors, are great because of the R̥bhus (vs. 6), and through the R̥bhus people gain wealth (5a, 6c, 8d), vigor (8d), fame (5a, 9bc), and descendants (9a).

1. Produced without horse and rein, the praiseworthy chariot with its three wheels rolls through the airy space.
   This is the great proclamation of your divinity: that you prosper heaven and earth, o R̥bhus.

2. The very perceptive ones who made from mind by insight the smooth-running chariot, which never overturns—
   (to you,) o Vājas, o R̥bhus, we now dedicate (the soma) of this pressing for you to drink.
3. Your greatness became well proclaimed among the gods, o Vājas, R̥bhus, and Vibhūs:
   that you fashion your parents as youths for them to keep going, even though they were enfeebled, worn out by age.
4. You divided the single cup into four; out of a cowhide you made a cow to flow (milk) by your insights.
   So then you attained immortality among the gods by your obedience, o Vājas, R̥bhus: that is your praiseworthy (attainment).
5. From the R̥bhus comes wealth that best brings the foremost fame, which the men famed as Vājas have produced,
   that is fashioned by the Vibhvans, that is to be proclaimed at the ritual distributions. Whom you help, o gods, he has wide boundaries.
6. He is a prizewinning charger; he a seer through his verbal artfulness; he a champion, an archer, who is difficult to overcome in battles;
   he has received an increase of his wealth and he an abundance of good heroes—he, whom Vāja and Vibhvan, whom the R̥bhus have helped.
7. An excellent, beautiful robe has been placed upon you: (this) song of praise, o Vājas, R̥bhus. Take pleasure in it!
   Because you are insightful poets perceiving inspired words, we dedicate (it) to you with this formulation.
8. You who know all the things that nourish men, for us (fashion) from the Holy Places [=the ritual ground]
   the highest heavenly prize that brings the explosiveness of a bull; fashion for us wealth and vitality, o R̥bhus.
9. Giving offspring here and wealth here, fashion here for us the fame that heroes accompany.
   The bright prize by which we would be brilliant beyond others, o R̥bhus, have you given to us.

IV.37 (333) R̥bhus

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: triṣṭubh 1–4, anuṣṭubh 5–8

Meter divides this hymn into two parts: the first half is in trimeter and the second in dimeter. That might indicate that the two parts were originally two different hymns, but the two parts show a thematic unity. Running through the hymn is the explicit and implicit image of the horse, although the meaning of the horse is constantly

changing. The first verse does not mention a horse, but it invites the R̥bhus to come in their chariots to the sacrifice, so the horse implicitly carries the R̥bhus. In 4a the bahuvrīhi *pī́voaśva* might mean "(having) fat horses," but we have taken it to refer to the butter offerings belonging to the R̥bhus, and therefore we have translated "(having) horses of fat," just as the R̥bhus' "blazing chariots" in the bahuvrīhi *śucádratha* likely refers to the sacrificial fires. In 4b the R̥bhus themselves are addressed as prize-winning horses. The theme then becomes more pronounced in the second half of the hymn. In verse 5b they are summoned as a team of horses, and in 5d at least one of them is called a horseman. In verse 6 the sacrificer's horse, here probably the hymn, is a steed that makes him a winner. And finally in verse 8 the wealth that the R̥bhus bring may be a horse, but this verse is problematic and discussed in more detail below.

One of the lexical features of the hymn is the wording of the invocation to the Vājas and R̥bhukṣans. These are elliptical plurals. The "Vājas" refers to all three R̥bhus, who are most commonly named R̥bhu, Vāja, and Vibhvan. "R̥bhukṣan," which means "Master of the R̥bhus," can refer to Indra, but it can also be a name for one of the R̥bhus, that is, the R̥bhu who is named "R̥bhu." The plural R̥bhukṣans here, therefore, are probably again just the three R̥bhus. In verse 5 the poet encodes two R̥bhus in the appellative use of their names: R̥bhu in *r̥bhú* "craftsman" (5a) and Vāja in *vā́ja* "prize" (5b). The name of the third R̥bhu, Vibhvan or Vibhū, does not appear in this verse, or anywhere else in the hymn. However, he may be the horseman (*aśvín*) in 5cd, for horses are "wide-ranging" (*vibhú*), as in III.6.9b *vibhávo hí áśvāḥ* "for your horses are wide-ranging." The word *aśvínam* also anticipates the invocation of the Nāsatyas, that is, the Aśvins, in verse 8. The addition of the Aśvins may point to the use of this hymn in an Atirātra or Overnight Soma Rite, since in that rite the Aśvins are summoned in the early morning after the soma-pressing day.

Verse 3 poses some difficulty because *tryudā́ya*, here translated "thrice ascending," is a hapax of unsure meaning. Perhaps wisely, Geldner does not try translating it at all. Sāyaṇa links *tri-* "three" to the three soma pressings, but the R̥bhus do not receive soma at the Morning or Midday Pressings. Therefore, while *-udā́ya* likely does describe soma pressing (*sávana*), *tri-* may refer to three soma offerings to the three R̥bhus.

But the most problematic verse is the last, and our interpretation is tentative. The verse appears to refer to a Horse Sacrifice. In the classical rite the horse is released to wander through various territories before it is finally sacrificed. Here the horse is the wealth that the R̥bhus, Indra, and the Aśvins bring from surrounding lands. As the sacrificial horse is slaughtered and cut up, so wealth is generously apportioned to the sacrificers.

1. Travel toward our rite, o Vājas, o R̥bhukṣans, you gods, along the paths
 the gods travel,
 just as you established the sacrifice for yourselves among these clans of
 Manu on a clear day of days, o you who bring joy.

2. Let the sacrifices be (pleasing) to your heart and mind: pleasing, they go today clothed in ghee.
   The full pressings will give you joy, and when drunk, they will inspire you to determination and skill.
3. Just as the thrice ascending (soma-pressing) has been established by the gods for you and the praise song has been given to you, o Vājas, o R̥bhukṣans,
   I, like Manu, offer the soma among the clans below [=humans] to you together with the (clans) of lofty heaven [=gods].
4. Be those with horses of fat and blazing chariots, with lips of bronze and fine neck-ornaments, o you prizewinners!
   O son of Indra and children of strength, the first (of the soma) has been assigned to you for your exhilaration.
5. O R̥bhukṣans, we summon the craftsman who is wealth, the team of best prizewinning horses at (the contest for) the prize, and,
   together with Indra, the horseman who is always best at winning.
6. The mortal whom you and Indra help, o R̥bhus—
   through his insights, let just him be a winner in winning wisdom and let him (be a winner) with his steed.
7. For us clear away paths (to enable us) to sacrifice, o Vājas, o R̥bhukṣans,
   in order (for us) to cross all regions, since you are praised, o patrons.
8. (Cut up) that wealth for us, o Vājas, R̥bhukṣans, Indra, and Nāsatyas,
   (which is the sacrificial) horse from the border lands. Cut it up abundantly to give (us) bounties.

IV.38 (334) Heaven and Earth (1), Dadhikrā (2–10)

Vāmadeva Gautama
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn and the next two (IV.39–40) are dedicated to a horse known as Dadhikrā(van), a prizewinning racer and a warhorse. Although no doubt in part referring to a real horse belonging to Trasadasyu, king of the Pūrus, it also represents the sacrificial horse of the great royal sacrifice, the Aśvamedha, and a symbol of Pūru, and then general Ārya, hegemony. In this capacity it is compared to the sun, in the last, triumphal verse.

What the reader will notice most, however, is the exuberance and precision of the equine imagery, emphasizing especially the headlong speed of the horse and his constant goal: groups of female animals, presumably mares. The sense of speed is enhanced by the regular use of "and" to string verses together; indeed, the hymn begins with one. Unfortunately some of the imagery is not entirely clear; see especially verse 4, where some of the translation is provisional.

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns the first verse to Heaven and Earth, it is more likely that Mitra and Varuṇa are the referents of the unspecified duals.

1. And since the earlier gifts were from you two [=Mitra and Varuṇa], the ones that Trasadasyu was to send spilling down for the Pūrus,
you have (also) given the one [=horse] who wins dwelling places, who wins meadows, a bane for the Dasyus, overwhelming, powerful.
2. And a prizewinner providing many fulfillments have you given—Dadhikrā, who belongs to all the communities,
a straight-flying falcon, frothing at the mouth, swift, to be constantly celebrated by the stranger, a champion like a lord of men.
3. The one whom every Pūru applauds in excitement as he runs as if down an easy slope—
greedy with his hooves like a champion seeking his meal, outstripping chariots, swooping like the wind.
4. The one who, hemming in the things to be seized in battles, keeps going to (the contests for) cows as one better at winning,
foaming visibly, setting his attention on the (rites of) distribution, across the circlet (of fire? the sun?), around the waters of Āyu.
5. And the settled peoples shriek after him at his raidings as if after a thief who steals clothes,
as he makes his way downward like a famished falcon toward fame and a herd full of livestock.
6. And desiring to run first, he keeps bearing down upon them (fem. [=mares?]), with the ranks of chariots,
garlanding himself like a resplendent groomsman, constantly licking the dust, having bitten the grit.
7. And this prizewinner, victorious, truthful, himself seeking fame with his own body in the clash,
hastening headlong toward them (fem. [=mares?]) as they go hastily, straight-flying, scatters dust up to the eyebrows as he stretches out straight.
8. And they take fear at his charge as he shows his mettle, as if at the thundering of heaven.
When a thousand have battled him, the fearsome one becomes difficult to obstruct, as he stretches out straight.
9. And the peoples admire the speed of him who fills the territories, the superiority of the swift one.
And they say about him as they disperse at the encounter: "Dadhikrā has run away with thousands."
10. Dadhikrā has stretched over the five peoples with his vast power, like the sun over the waters with its light.
Gaining thousands, gaining hundreds, let the prizewinning steed infuse these words with honey.

IV.39 (335) Dadhikrā

Vāmadeva Gautama
6 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 6

In this celebratory hymn the very real and physical horse of the preceding hymn (IV.38) has become a mere recipient of and occasion for a formal encomium. He is invoked along with a number of gods and thus appears to have achieved a measure of divinity, but the artistry of IV.38 has been replaced by the deployment of stiff and conventional formulae. It is, however, interesting to see how an encomium of this sort, presumably a particular type of occasional verse, would be constructed.

1. The swift Dadhikrā—him will we now praise, and we will pay tribute to Heaven and to Earth.
   Let the Dawns, dawning, sweeten me. They will lead me across all difficult passages.
2. Fulfilling my conception, I pay tribute to the great steed, to Dadhikrāvan, the bullish one of many favors,
   whom, triumphant, shining like fire, you gave to the Pūrus, o Mitra and Varuṇa, as one triumphant for the Pūrus.
3. Whoever has paid tribute to the horse Dadhikrāvan when the fire has been kindled at the break of dawn,
   him let Aditi make without offense, in concert with Mitra and Varuṇa.
4. Once we (have paid tribute to) the refreshment and the great nourishment of Dadhikrāvan, and have brought to mind the auspicious name of the Maruts,
   we call upon Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, and mace-armed Indra for well-being.
5. Both (sides) vie in invoking (him) just like Indra, as they rouse themselves and reverently approach the sacrifice.
   Dadhikrā, who makes sweetness for the mortal, have you, o Mitra and Varuṇa, given to us as our horse.
6. Dadhikrāvan have I paid tribute to—the victorious, prizewinning horse.
   He will make our mouths fragrant; he will lengthen our lifetimes.

IV.40 (336) Dadhikrā (1–4), Sūrya (5)

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 1

The first verse of the hymn is in the same formal style as the preceding hymn, and in fact is almost slavishly based on IV.39.1; it is also in the same meter (triṣṭubh) as that hymn. But when the hymn turns to jagatī, its style changes dramatically—to the exuberant, inventive, playful descriptions of the first Dadhikrā hymn, IV.38. The three middle verses (3–5) capture the dizzying speed and agility of the horse

as he races around the track, as they compare him to a bird swooping in full flight. The language is equally dizzying and agile: the poet is fond of phonetic and morphological figures, several of them involving morphologically impossible hapaxes concocted by phonologically manipulating underlying morphology. (See esp. vs. 2.)

The final verse (5) is an explosion of morphological figures: eight compounds ending in *-sád-* "sitting" (pādas abc), growing closer and closer together, followed by four ending in *-jā́-* "born" crammed into the final pāda—which culminates in the last word *ṛtám* "truth." The referent of all these compounds is no longer the horse Dadhikrā, at least not directly. Rather, as with the last verse of IV.38, the horse is now identified with cosmic forces—the sun, but probably also the ritual fire—and these in turn identified with the king. (See Proferes 2007: 127–28.) This verse is much repeated and employed in later Vedic texts.

1. Just to Dadhikrāvan will we now pay tribute—let all the Dawns sweeten me—
   and to the Waters, Agni, Dawn, and the Sun, also to Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, the victorious.
2. A consummate warrior seeking plunder, seeking cattle, he will seek fame in a rush to the distance, in a headlong rush to the refreshments of Dawn.
   The real thing—running, running faster, flying—Dadhikrāvan gives birth to refreshment, nourishment, and the sun.
3. And (the wind) fans up his "feathers" [=mane], like the feathers of a bird in greedy pursuit, while he runs and rushes headlong,
   while he swoops like a falcon around the curving (racecourse), while he keeps advancing with his vigor—Dadhikrāvan.
4. And this prizewinner, bound at neck, shoulder, and mouth, rushes headlong to the lash—
   Dadhikrā, growing stronger and stronger following his will, galloping and galloping following the curves of the paths.
5. A goose sitting in the gleaming (waters), a good one sitting in the midspace, a Hotar sitting at the vedi, a guest sitting in the dwelling,
   sitting among men, sitting in the choice place, sitting in truth, sitting in high heaven, water-born, cow-born, truth-born, stone-born—Truth.

IV.41 (337) Indra and Varuṇa

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Though immediately preceding the great Indra–Varuṇa dialogue hymn IV.42, with its themes of contested sovereignty and complementary divine and human royal

functions, this hymn, also dedicated to Indra and Varuṇa, is a relatively simple and straightforward joint praise of and appeal to the two divinities as an undifferentiated pair. The poet speaks repeatedly of his desire for the friendship and companionship of the two gods, repeatedly asks them for their help, and seeks material gain from them as well. Although the gods are not treated separately, the contents reflect Indra's qualities more than Varuṇa's, for the two are especially beseeched for aid in defeating rivals in contest and battles (vss. 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, with imagery derived from contests in vss. 8–9).

1. O Indra and Varuṇa, which praise song obtains your favor, bringing oblations like the immortal Hotar?
   (The one) spoken by us, which, filled with resolve, filled with homage, will touch your heart, o Indra and Varuṇa.
2. Indra and Varuṇa—the mortal who has made the two gods his own friends for comradeship, bringing them pleasing offerings,
   he smashes obstacles and his rivals in clashes; by your great forms of help he becomes far-famed.
3. Indra and Varuṇa are the best at providing treasure to men who have performed (ritual) labor just so,
   when as comrades for comradeship they will make themselves exhilarated with the pressed soma juices and the very pleasing offering.
4. O Indra and Varuṇa, you powerful ones—smash your missile, your most powerful mace down on him
   who turns his evil ways on us, who is wolfishness and deception (personified). Against him show the measure of your overwhelming power.
5. O Indra and Varuṇa—become the lovers of this insight, like bulls of a milk-cow.
   She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.
6. When progeny and posterity are at stake, when fields, the sight of the sun, and the masculine power of the bull,
   Indra and Varuṇa should be here for us, the wondrous pair with their forms of help at the turning point.
7. For it is just you (we choose) for your age-old help because of your pervasive preeminence, o good friends of the cattle-seeker;
   we choose you for your dear comradeship, the two champions, most munificent like parents, who are luck itself.
8. As those seeking prizes go to a contest, these insights, seeking you, have gone to you for help, o you of good gifts [/drops].
   As cows [=milk] approach soma for mixing, my hymns and inspired thoughts have approached Indra and Varuṇa for splendor.

9. These inspired thoughts of mine have come up to Indra and Varuṇa, seeking material goods.
Like those who enjoy a good thing, they have approached them, seeking a share of goods as fleet mares (seek a share) of fame.
10. Might we by ourselves be lords of prosperity in horses and chariots, of our own proper wealth,
making the two (gods) our own along with their newer forms of help. Let riches in teams accompany (them) among us.
11. O lofty Indra and Varuṇa, with your lofty forms of help drive here to us at the winning of prizes.
When the missiles will play in the battles, (thanks to) you might we be the winners of this contest.

IV.42 (338) Indra and Varuṇa

Trasadasyu Paurukutsya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

According to the Anukramaṇī, the author of this hymn is King Trasadasyu, and the first six verses are his own self-praise. Beginning from a similar premise, Lommel (1951) argues that verses 1–6 were spoken by King Trasadasyu on the occasion of his royal consecration. Lommel points out that in the later royal consecration rite, the king is compared to both Varuṇa as *dharmapati* "lord of dharma" and to Indra as *vṛtrahan* "smasher of Vṛtra." Thus Trasadasyu identifies himself as both Indra and Varuṇa, and because of these identifications the poet of the hymn affirms that the king is "half a god" (vs. 8). Schmidt (1992) elaborated on this thesis, locating the hymn in a different ritual context. He argues that according to later Vedic tradition Varuṇa and Indra are dominant in different seasons, and this alternation between the two gods is visible in this hymn. So according to Schmidt (1992: 340), "King Trasadasyu impersonates both Varuṇa and Indra by performing their functions according to the demands of the seasons." This hymn marks the transition from the settled period, in which the king enacts the role of Varuṇa, to the period of raiding and battle, when he becomes Indra. Thus it begins with the king's identification with Varuṇa, but "in the third stanza the king affirms that he is not only Varuṇa but also Indra and thus announces the transition to his Indra-like activities which he details in the fifth and sixth stanza." However the ritual context is interpreted, the hymn provides insight into the nature of kingship in the Ṛgvedic period.

It is not clear whose voice it is in verse 7. For Lommel it is the poet; for Geldner and Renou, Varuṇa. Schmidt (1992: 341) offers the interesting suggestion that these two possibilities need not exclude one another if at this point in the rite or at this time of the year, a priest impersonates Varuṇa. He surmises that when the king left for war, he installed a caretaker in the settlement, represented here by the poet.

Verse 8 refers to a legend about the birth of Trasadasyu, but its details are uncertain. According to Sieg (1902: 97–98), following a tradition mentioned in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XIII.5.4.5, Purukutsa performed a Horse Sacrifice with a horse named Daurgaha, and his son Trasadasyu was born as a result. As Lommel (1951: 37) points out, this reference to Trasadasyu's birth would have enhanced his dignity and further justified his identification with Indra and Varuṇa because of the favor those gods showed to his mother. Sāyaṇa gives another, less likely version of the legend. According to this version, King Purukutsa Daurgaha had been captured. Seeing that the kingdom was left without a king, the principal wife of Purukutsa appealed to the Seven Seers, who offered a sacrifice to Indra and Varuṇa on her behalf, and the gods then gave her Trasadasyu as her son.

In the final verses (9 and 10) the poet addresses Indra and Varuṇa in a dual dvandva compound *indrāvaruṇā,* which signals the gods' close connection to one another. Thus, while the rest of the hymn describes the two sides of kingship, these last verses emphasize the unity of the kingship represented by the two gods and their union in King Trasadasyu. The poet's final request for a cow "that does not kick" (*ánapasphurantī*) may be explained by its possible double meaning. On the one hand, a cow that doesn't kick is one that is easy to milk and therefore represents the prosperity that the poet hopes for (10a). On the other hand, as Renou notes, the description "never kicking" (*ánapasphur*) is applied to the soma when it is compared to a cow in VIII.69.10. So then the cow in this verse may also be good soma, which will "elate" the gods (10b). Therefore, the cow "that does not kick" is both the successful sacrificial performance and the successful result of the sacrifice.

1. [As Varuṇa:] Now as before, mine is the kingship of a lifelong ruler, so
    that all the immortals (are) ours:
   the gods follow the will of Varuṇa; I am king of the boundary of the
    highest covering [=the boundary of heaven].
2. I am King Varuṇa. For me (the gods) uphold these foremost lordly
    powers;
   the gods follow the will of Varuṇa. I am king of the boundary of the
    highest covering.
3. I, Varuṇa, am Indra. By my greatness, these two realms, wide and deep,
    have strong support.
   Like Tvaṣṭar, knowing all living beings, I pressed together the two
    world-halves and upheld them.
4. I swelled the splashing (and mounting) waters; I upheld heaven on the
    seat of truth.
   Through the truth the son of Aditi possesses the truth, and he spread
    wide the threefold earth.
5. [As Indra:] Men call upon me as they race to victory with their good
    horses; surrounded in battle they call upon me.

I make the contest—I who am generous Indra. Of overwhelming power, I raise the dust.

6. I have done all these things. No divine power will block me, who am unopposable.
   When the soma juices, when the hymns, have exhilarated me, both endless realms become afraid.
7. [The poet:] All living beings know this of you, and you proclaim these things to Varuṇa, o you ritual adept:
   you are famed as he who smashed obstacles; you, Indra, made the blocked rivers to flow.
8. Our forefathers, the Seven Seers, were here, when Daurgaha was being bound.
   For her [=Purukutsa's wife] they won by their sacrifice Trasadasyu, who overcomes obstacles like Indra (and) who is half a god.
9. Because the wife of Purukutsa served you two with oblations and acts of homage, o Indra and Varuṇa,
   so then to her you two gave King Trasadasyu, who smashes obstacles (and) who is half a god.
10. Having won, we should become elated by wealth, the gods by the oblation, and the cows by pasture land.
    All our days, o Indra and Varuṇa, grant to us the milk-cow that does not kick.

IV.43 (339) Aśvins

Purumīḷha Sauhotra and Ajamīḷha Sauhotra
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The first four verses of this hymn are filled with questions, with the poet seeking to identify the god or gods who will be most attentive to him. He begins by casting his net widely, with any and all gods potentially the answer to his petitions. (These plural possibilities are signaled grammatically and lexically: *katamá* "which one?" [1a, 2a, 2b] explicitly requires a choice from three or more possible answers, and "of those worthy of the sacrifice" [1a], "among the immortals" [1c], and "of the gods" [2b] allow these choices to be made from the full set of divinities.) But the questions soon pick the Aśvins out as the correct answer to the earlier questions. A query about their chariot (2cd), which the maiden Sūryā chose as her bridal conveyance, obliquely but uniquely identifies the Aśvins, and the remaining questions (vss. 3–4) focus on their ability and willingness to aid us.

With our benefactors now identified as the Aśvins, the next two verses (5–6) concern their chariot journey (somewhat obscurely), with the announcement of the first sight of their chariot made in the second half of verse 6. In the final verse,

identical to the last verse of IV.44, the poet reminds the gods that he has provided them with nourishment and asks for their return favor.

The hymn displays a neat, but uninsistent, ring composition. In verse 1d the poet asks where to "fix" his praise and offerings to the god, using a form of the root *śri*; the same root is found in the final pāda of the hymn (7d), where our desire of the gods is, reciprocally, "fixed." This complementarity is emphasized by the two morphologically parallel words that express what we offer to the gods (*suṣṭutí* "good praise," 1d) and what we hope for in return (*sumatí* "good favor," 7b).

The hymn twice mentions the involvement of the Aśvins (and their chariot) in the marriage of Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun (vss. 2, 6), the second time in the present tense coinciding with our own first sight of their chariot. While most references to Sūryā and her marriage in Aśvin hymns are set in the mythic past, in this short Aśvin cycle (IV.43–45) Sūryā is present with the Aśvins when they come to the sacrifice, travelling with them on the same chariot (see IV.44.1, 45.1).

1. Who will listen? Which one of those worthy of the sacrifice? Which god will take pleasure in our extolling?
   In whose heart among the immortals shall we fix this dearest divine good praise accompanied by good oblations?
2. Who will have mercy? Which one (will be) the first to come? Which one of the gods (will be) the most wealful?
   What swift chariot with speeding horses do they say is the one that the Daughter of the Sun chose?
3. For during days such as these you two come right away, like Indra to his ability at the decisive turn.
   You two, born from heaven as fine-feathered heavenly birds—by which one of your abilities do you become the most able?
4. What is your distribution (of goods) and with what (distribution) do you come here to us when called upon?
   Who is yours? Make wide space for us in close quarters, even out of great neglect, with your help, o honeyed, wondrous pair.
5. Your chariot reaches widely around heaven. When it rolls here to you from the sea,
   (its wheel-rims) splash honey upon honey on you, you two honeyed ones, when cooked nourishments are roasted [?] for you two.
6. The Sindhu River sprinkles your horses with the Rasā; your ruddy birds avoid the glowing heat.
   Your speedy vehicle has just appeared, with which you two become the masters [/husbands] of Sūryā.
7. Since I have nourished you two, whether here or there, in the same way, so (let there be) this good favor for us, o you who bring prizes as treasures:
   make wide space for the singer. Our desire is fixed in your direction, o Nāsatyas.

IV.44 (340) Aśvins

Purumīḷha Sauhotra and Ajamīḷha Sauhotra
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Connected with IV.43 by their shared final verse, this hymn begins with another reference to the wedding journey of Sūryā on the Aśvins' chariot, also expressed in the present tense (like IV.43.6; see also IV.45.1). Thereafter the hymn concentrates solely on the Aśvins' chariot journey to our sacrifice and the reciprocal ritual exchange (aid and goods for soma and other oblations) that will occur there. The threat of other sacrificers attracting the gods elsewhere is also on the poet's mind (vss. 3–5).

1. Today, o Aśvins, we would call your chariot of broad expanse here to its meeting with the cow,
   (the chariot) that conveys Sūryā, providing her a standing place, the best of many, whose team is hymns, the one seeking goods.
2. You two, o Aśvins, you sons of heaven, win splendor among the gods by your abilities.
   Nourishments escort your wondrous form when the humped horses [?] convey you on the chariot.
3. Who today, having bestowed his oblation, will attract you here with his chants, for help or for drinking the pressed soma,
   or, having held fast to his reverence, will turn (you) here for the foremost striving for truth, O Aśvins?
4. O you who appear in many places, with your golden chariot drive right up to this sacrifice here, o Nāsatyas.
   Just you will drink of the somian honey, and you will establish a treasure for the person who distributes it.
5. Drive right here to us from heaven and from the earth with your golden, smooth-rolling chariot.
   Let the others who seek the gods not hold you down, because our ancient umbilical tie is attached to you.
6. Now, wondrous ones, measure out lofty wealth conferring many heroes to us both [=singers and patrons].
   As the superior men furthered your praise, o Aśvins, the Ājamīḷhas have come to your joint praise.
7. Since I have nourished you two, whether here or there, in the same way, so (let there be) this good favor for us, o you who bring prizes as treasures:
   make wide space for the singer. Our desire is fixed in your direction, o Nāsatyas.

IV.45 (341) Aśvins

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7

This hymn represents the culmination of the chariot-journey sequence in the three Aśvin hymns of Maṇḍala IV. In IV.43 the poet began by asking who among the gods will listen to his prayers and come to him with aid. Having identified the Aśvins as his target, he briefly describes their chariot and its journey and announces its arrival. In IV.44 the poet once again calls the chariot and the Aśvins to his sacrifice and urges them to avoid the sacrifices of others.

Here in this hymn (IV.45), the Aśvins' chariot journey is depicted as happening simultaneously with the performance of the sacrifice, and in fact the two realms are to some extent conflated. Their chariot(s) and horses behave in the same way and are described with the same verb (vs. 2ab) as the beam of the kindled ritual fire (vs. 1a), and the Aśvins both come bringing honey and come for the honey offered them. (Honey is a leitmotif throughout the hymn, occurring at least once in each of the first five verses.) The ritual is also depicted in more detail than in the last two hymns: see the actions of the priest in verses 5ab and 7d. Moreover, the exact time at which the journey and the sacrifice are happening, namely dawn, is repeatedly mentioned (vss. 2, 4, 5), and the other light sources associated with the break of day have their place in the hymn: the ritual fires (1a, 5ab) and the sun (vss. 2, 6).

As in the other two Aśvin hymns in this series, Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, is present not merely in mythological memory but in the present, ritual time—but in this hymn she is not mentioned by name. Instead, an ingenious turn of phrase "three . . . are on (the chariot) as a pair" in verse 1 must refer to the pairing of the two Aśvins with Sūryā, especially since the word for "pair" *mithuná* is regularly used for a sexual pairing. Her anonymous appearance in the first verse of the hymn suggests the fertile fruitfulness that the overflowing honey in the rest of the hymn also represents.

The final verse of the hymn formulaically celebrates the Aśvins' chariot, and this verse sums up not merely this hymn but the triad of Aśvin hymns that it closes.

1. Now this radiant beam arises; the earth-encircling chariot is hitched up
   upon the back of this heaven.
   Three bringing nourishment [=Aśvins and Sūryā] are upon it [=the
   chariot] as a pair; a fourth, a skin-bag, teems with honey.
2. Up rise your nourishing, honey-filled chariots and horses at the break
   of dawn,
   uncovering the darkness that had been confined and stretching like the
   blazing sun through the dusky realm.
3. Drink of the honey with your honey-drinking mouths and hitch up your
   own dear chariot for honey.

You quicken the course of the path with honey, and you carry your honey-filled skin-bag, o Aśvins.

4. Your geese—honeyed, unfaltering, golden-feathered, calling "uhu" [?], waking at dawn,
   swimming in water, invigorating, stroking the invigorator [=soma]—(along with them) you go to the pressings of the honeyed (soma) like flies to honey.
5. Providing good ceremonies, honey-filled, the ruddy fires awaken at dawn in response to the Aśvins,
   when the wide-gazing (priest), his hands washed, advancing (across the ritual ground), has pressed the honeyed soma with stones.
6. (Your horses) keeping watch nearby through the days, in constant agitation, stretching like the blazing sun through the dusky realm—
   hitching up his own horses, the Sun also comes speeding. By your own independent power, you two perceive all the paths.
7. I have (now) proclaimed (this chariot of) yours, o Aśvins, setting my insight before you—the unaging chariot that has good horses,
   with which in a day you drive around the dusky realms to the provider offering oblation, as he advances (across the ritual ground).

IV.46 (342) Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–7)

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn never strays from its ritual purpose: at the Morning Pressing of the soma sacrifice, Vāyu and then Indra and Vāyu receive the first offerings of soma. Here they are urged to come to the sacrifice and drink their shares.

1. Drink the foremost of the honeys, the pressed (soma), o Vāyu, at the rituals of daybreak,
   for you are the first drinker.
2. With a hundred forms of help for us, (come,) provided with a team, having Indra as charioteer.
   O Vāyu—may you both become sated on our pressed (soma).
3. Indra and Vāyu, let your thousand fallow bays convey you here, to the pleasurable offering,
   to drink the soma.
4. O Indra and Vāyu, the chariot with the golden chariot box, good for the ceremony,
   touching heaven—because you will mount it—
5. With that chariot of broad dimension come up to the pious one.
   O Indra and Vāyu, come here.

6. O Indra and Vāyu, here is the pressed (soma): in concert with the gods
   drink it in the house of the pious man.
7. Here be your advance, o Indra and Vāyu, (here) your unhitching,
   here for you to drink the soma.

IV.47 (343) Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–4)

Vāmadeva Gautama
4 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one fulfills its ritual purpose with a minimum of fuss: Vāyu, and then Indra and Vāyu, are invited to partake of the first soma offerings at the Morning Pressing.

1. Vāyu, the clear (soma) has been held out to you, the foremost of the
      honey, at the rituals of daybreak.
   (Since you are) craved, drive here to drink the soma, o god, (on a
      chariot) with a team.
2. O Indra and Vāyu, you two have the right to the drinking of these soma
      drinks,
   for the drops go to you like waters, converging, to the deep.
3. O Vāyu and Indra, tempestuous ones, lords of power, on the same
      chariot,
   provided with teams, drive here to help us, to drink the soma.
4. Your teams, craved by many, which are for the pious, o men,
   stop them by us, o Indra and Vāyu, you whose vehicle is the sacrifice.

IV.48 (344) Vāyu

Vāmadeva Gautama
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

Unlike the two preceding hymns to Vāyu and Indra (IV.46–47), with their simple diction and single purpose, this hymn to Vāyu alone, although it also continues the journey motif, especially in the refrain of verses 1–4, contains some enigmatic phraseology and striking images. In particular both the sense and the syntactic construction of the simile in the second pāda of verse 1 are much disputed. On the basis of VI.14.3 we believe "the riches of the stranger" (*rā́yo aryáḥ*) to refer to Ārya people in general and their poets in particular.

Note that the soma-drinking, the purpose of Vāyu's journey, is mentioned only in the refrain, and that the time of day for the ritual, early morning, is only obliquely referred to, in verse 3.

1. Pursue the invocations not (yet) pursued, just as "the riches of the stranger" [=the poets of the Āryas] pursue poetic inspirations.
   – O Vāyu, drive here with your glittering chariot, to drink of the pressed (soma).
2. Taking taunts out of harness, (but yourself) provided with a team, with Indra as charioteer,
   o Vāyu, drive here with your glittering chariot, to drink of the pressed (soma).
3. The two black treasure chambers [=Night and Dawn], with all their ornaments, have directed themselves after each other in turn.
   – O Vāyu, drive here with your glittering chariot, to drink of the pressed (soma).
4. Let the ones with mind as yoke, the ninety-nine yoked ones, convey you.
   – O Vāyu, drive here with your glittering chariot, to drink of the pressed (soma).
5. O Vāyu, hitch up a hundred flourishing fallow bays,
   or, since you have thousands, let your chariot drive here with its (full) dimension.

IV.49 (345) Indra and Bṛhaspati

Vāmadeva Gautama
6 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn is reminiscent of the nearby Vāyu and Indra hymns (IV.46–47), elementary in diction and simple in purpose, inviting the two divinities to come and drink the soma. It seems likely that IV.49 was indeed based, somewhat artificially, on those former hymns, as there is no standard ritual offering of soma to Indra and Bṛhaspati as there is to Indra and Vāyu. Indeed, Bṛhaspati does not otherwise drink soma in the Ṛgveda (save for IV.50.10). Evidence for the dependence of this hymn on Indra and Vāyu hymns is found in the second pāda of verse 3, which is also found in I.135.7 with the grammatical subjects Indra and Vāyu. The elementary and derivative nature of this hymn contrasts strongly with the richness of the following hymn (IV.50) to the same divinities.

1. This dear oblation here is in your mouth, o Indra and Bṛhaspati;
   the solemn speech and the exhilarating drink are being announced.
2. This soma here is being poured in circles for you, o Indra and Bṛhaspati,
   pleasing, to be drunk to exhilaration.
3. Come here to our house, o Bṛhaspati and Indra,
   as soma-drinkers to drink the soma.
4. In us, o Indra and Bṛhaspati, place wealth in hundreds of cows,
   rich in horses, thousand-fold.

5. Indra and Bṛhaspati we invoke with hymns when (the soma) is pressed,
 to drink of this soma here.
6. Drink the soma, o Indra and Bṛhaspati, in the house of the pious one.
 Become exhilarated, being at home with it.

IV.50 (346) Bṛhaspati (1–9), Bṛhaspati and Indra (10–11)

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 10

This hymn falls naturally into several sections, but although some scholars consider it to be a composite of up to three independent hymns, an overall unity can be detected. (Of course, this unity may results from the combining of once separate elements.) Indeed, the hymn seems to encapsulate the historical development of the Vala myth, which concerns the freeing of the cows from the Vala cave where they were imprisoned, and its principal participants, Indra, Bṛhaspati, and the Aṅgirases. As Schmidt has clearly shown (1968), Indra was the original hero of the Vala myth, in his role as priest-king and with his priestly weapons—songs and correctly formulated true speech—with the Aṅgiras singers as his helpers. In this role he received the epithet "bṛhaspati." But in time the epithet was split off into a separately conceived divine figure Bṛhaspati, first as an alloform of Indra and then detached from Indra as an independent divinity who served as Indra's priest—taking with him Indra's priestly role, while Indra retained the roles of king and warrior. In this hymn we first see a unitary (Indra-)Bṛhaspati figure, then the human equivalent of the split figure, in the form of king and "Formulator" priest. And finally the split divine figures, Indra and Bṛhaspati, are invited to share the ritual.

The first six verses are dedicated to the mythic deeds of Bṛhaspati (or "Bṛhaspati") with the Vala myth occupying verses 2–5. The Aṅgirases are prominent, though not named. The final verse of this portion (6) clearly brings the section to a close, returning it to the present with explicit treatment of our ritual honoring of Bṛhaspati, and wishes for our continued prosperity typically found in hymn-final verses. Verses 7–9 promise success of all sorts to the king who does honor to Bṛhaspati and to his earthly representative, the "Formulator" (Brahmán), a role that will evolve into the later Purohita (house-priest of the king) (note the verb phrase *puró* √*dhā* in vs. 1). This section seems to apply the lessons of the mythic past found in verses 1–6 to the contemporary situation and to establish a symbiotic relationship between Formulator and king, matching the relationship between the mythic Bṛhaspati and the (unnamed) Indra, from whom Bṛhaspati has been split. It follows logically that the last two verses (10–11) invite Bṛhaspati and Indra to the sacrifice to drink the soma and bestow blessings on us. The unitary role in the opening mythic section has evolved into the double divine figures

summoned in the final section, by way of the mediating section showcasing these complementary roles in the human domain.

1. He who with his strength propped apart the ends of the earth, with a roar—Bṛhaspati possessing three seats—
   him with the gladdening tongue did the seers of old, the inspired poets in meditation, set in front—
2. Those [=Aṅgirases] of noisy tread, exulting at the good sign, o Bṛhaspati, who for us have battered at
   the dappled, glossy, uncheatable (cow-)enclosure [=Vala cave]. O Bṛhaspati, (after their action) guard its womb [=(the contents of) the Vala cave, the cows].
3. O Bṛhaspati, that which is the farthest distance, (coming) from there have those who touch the truth [=Aṅgirases] sat down here (for sacrifice) for you.
   For you do the deep-dug springs, milked by the stone, drip an abundance of honey all about.
4. Bṛhaspati, on first being born from the great light, in the farthest distant heaven,
   he, possessing seven mouths [=Aṅgirases] and seven reins [=seers?], being powerfully born, blew apart the dark shades with his roar.
5. He with his flock possessing good rhythm, the flock possessing chant—he broke Vala, broke its bolt with his roar.
   Bṛhaspati drove up the ruddy (cows) who sweeten the oblation, who kept lowing as he was bellowing.
6. Thus to the father to all the gods, to the bull, we would do honor with sacrifices, with homage, with oblations.
   O Bṛhaspati, may we, possessed of good offspring and of heroes, be lords of riches.

7. Only that king surmounts all the (forces) belonging to his opponents through his tempestuousness and heroism
   who supports Bṛhaspati (to be) well-supported, behaves agreeably to him, and extols him as the one receiving the first portion.
8. Only he dwells peacefully, well-situated in his own home; for him refreshment swells at all times;
   to him the clans bow just of themselves—for which king the Formulator comes first.
9. Unopposable, he wins riches belonging to his opponents and those belonging to his allies.
   The king who makes wide space for the Formulator seeking aid, him do the gods aid.

10. Bṛhaspati and Indra, drink the soma, becoming exhilarated at this sacrifice here, you who have bullish goods.
    Let the drops that stand by you enter you. In us deposit wealth consisting of hale heroes.
11. Bṛhaspati, Indra, strengthen us. Let this benevolence of yours keep company with us.
    Aid our insightful thoughts; awaken plentiful gifts. Exhaust the hostilities of the stranger, of the rapacious ones.

IV.51 (347) Dawn

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is remarkable first for the fact that the dawns are always presented and addressed in the plural ("Dawns") rather than the singular, as so often. Indeed, when the poet wishes to refer to a single dawn, he uses instead the word "light" (vs. 1) or an unspecified pronoun (vs. 6). The grammatical plurality of the subject Dawns serves a thematic purpose: as in other dawn hymns the poet notes that each day's dawn is different, yet paradoxically all dawns are the same, coming in an unbroken chain from the east day after day (see, e.g., vs. 8).

As V. Yareham suggested (in an unpublished paper presented at the University of Texas Vedic Workshop, May 2007), the hymn is structured around an omphalos verse (6), with concentric matching verses surrounding it: 1–2 / 10–11 and 3–5 / 7–9. The omphalos poses a central and essentially unanswerable question, the one that always arises about the dawn(s): how can they be both the same and different, and the poet expresses his anxiety that he cannot identify the particular dawn in the swarm of identical ones. Behind this anxiety is another one, seen especially in verses 4, 6, and 7, namely whether we, the current sacrificers, will have the same material success with our dawn sacrifice as the ritualists of old.

Otherwise, the imagery is of the usual type for dawn hymns: the brilliant beauty of the dawns in contrast to the darkness, which they banish; their abrupt arising in the east and their subsequent journey; and the prayers for largesse, reminding us that the dakṣiṇā, the priestly gifts, were distributed at the dawn sacrifice.

1. Here has this light, the latest of many, stood (up) out of the east from the darkness, with its patterns.
   Now the daughters of Heaven radiating widely, the Dawns, will make a way for the people.
2. They have stood up—the bright Dawns—in the east, like the sacrificial posts fixed at ceremonies.

They have unclosed the doors of the enclosure of darkness as they dawn, blazing and pure.

3. Dawning today, the bounteous Dawns brighten the benefactors for the giving of largesse.
   In (a place) without brightness let the niggards sleep, unawakening in the middle of darkness.
4. Goddess Dawns, should it be the old course or a new one for you today—
   (or the one going) along which, you rich ladies, you richly dawned on the Aṅgiras(-clan) of the Nine-Cows, of the Ten-Cows, of the Seven-Mouths?
5. For you, goddesses, with horses whose yoke is truth, drive around the creatures in a single day,
   awakening the sleeping, every two-footed and four-footed living thing, to activity, o Dawns.
6. Where is she, which one of them is she, the age-old one along with whom they distributed the distributions of the R̥bhus?
   (I ask because) when the beautiful Dawns proceed in beauty, they cannot be distinguished—the unaging ones having the same appearance.
7. These same auspicious Dawns existed of old, those of superior heavenliness, who were really born of truth,
   at whose (time) one who had sacrificed and labored with hymns, praising and chanting, reached wealth in a single day.
8. They proceed, in the same way, from the east, spreading out from the same place in the same way.
   The Goddess Dawns, awakening from the seat of truth, like gushes of cows, become wakeful.
9. Just these now—the same ones in the same way—with immutable colors, the Dawns proceed,
   hiding the black void with their bright (colors), glistening, gleaming, shining with their own bodies.
10. O daughters of Heaven, radiating widely, bestow on us wealth in offspring, o goddesses.
   Being awakened from a comfortable place in response to you, may we be lords of an abundance of heroes.
11. O daughters of Heaven, radiating widely—I whose sacrifice is a beacon implore this of you, o Dawns:
   May we be glorious among the peoples. Let both Heaven and Goddess Earth ensure this.

IV.52 (348) Dawn

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 verses: gāyatrī

A simple hymn in contrast to the immediately preceding dawn hymn, with Dawn depicted and addressed only in the singular. The Aśvin pair is named in verses 2–3 because of their early-morning journey to the sacrifice.

1. This spirited lady, dawning forth from her sister [=Night],
   has appeared opposite—the daughter of Heaven.
2. Dappled bright and ruddy like a mare, the mother of cows, follower of truth,
   Dawn has become the companion of the Aśvins.
3. You are both the companion of the Aśvins, and you are also mother
   of cows,
   and also, Dawn, you have dominion over goods.
4. With awareness of you, in response to you, who keep away hatred,
   o liberal-spirited one,
   we have awakened with praises.
5. Her auspicious rays have appeared opposite, like gushes of cows.
   Dawn has filled up the wide expanse.
6. Having filled it up, wide-radiant one, you have uncovered the darkness
   with your light.
   O Dawn, help (us) according to your independent power.
7. Through heaven do you stretch with your rays, through the midspace
   wide and dear,
   o Dawn, with your bright brilliance.

IV.53 (349) Savitar

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 vereses: jagatī

A relatively straightforward hymn dedicated to Savitar, literally "the Impeller." Savitar's natural control over the rhythms of life—alternatively setting the world in motion and causing it to settle down—is emphasized, as is his omnipresence in the cosmos. It is noteworthy that throughout the hymn, even in the requests for Savitar's protection and benefits (vss. 1, 6–7), the god stays in the 3rd person, grammatically distanced from us despite his direct involvement in our affairs.

1. We would choose that great thing, worthy to be chosen, of god Savitar,
   the provident lord,
   with which by himself he holds out shelter to the pious. The great god
   has held it up for us through the nights.

2. The supporter of heaven, the lord of offspring of the living world, the sage poet, fastens on himself a tawny cloak.
   Wide-gazing, spreading out and filling the wide (midspace?), Savitar has begotten praiseworthy benevolence.
3. He has filled the heavenly and earthly realms. The god makes his signal-call to support his own.
   Savitar has stretched forth his two arms, at his impulsion causing the moving world to settle down and impelling it forth through the nights.
4. Undeceivable, watching over living beings, god Savitar guards his commandments.
   He has stretched his two arms for the offspring of the living world. He whose commandments are upheld rules over the great road.
5. Savitar (encompasses) the midspace three times in his greatness; he encompasses the three dusky realms and the three realms of light.
   He speeds the three heavens and the three earths. With his three commandments he guards us by himself.
6. Possessing lofty benevolence, the one who impels forth and causes to settle down, who exerts his will over both the moving world and the stationary,
   let him, god Savitar, hold out to us shelter providing threefold protection against distress for us and for our dwelling place.
7. The god has come according to the ritual progressions. Let him make our dwelling place strong. Let Savitar establish for us refreshment that brings good offspring.
   Let him quicken us through the nights and the days. Let him speed wealth that brings offspring.

IV.54 (350) Savitar

Vāmadeva Gautama
6 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 6

This hymn conveys a much more intimate sense of our connection to Savitar than the preceding hymn with its formal praises. This intimacy is achieved by the aorist of the immediate past that opens the hymn announcing his epiphany—"he has arrived!"—and by the vocatives and 2nd-person address that follow. The closeness of our relationship with the god allows us to ask him for something more personal than the shelter and support requested in IV.53, namely (in the middle verse, vs. 3) for Savitar to intercede on our behalf with anyone, divine or mortal, whom we have offended.

The hymn also makes heavy use of the verb *sū* "impel" from which Savitar's name is derived: it is found in all verses but the first.

1. He has arrived—god Savitar to be greeted by us now and at this very time of day to be invoked by superior men—

he who apportions treasures to the sons of Manu so that he will establish the best material wealth for us here.

2. For you first impel immortality to the gods worthy of the sacrifice as their highest share;
just after that, o Savitar, you reveal your gift: lives following in succession for the sons of Manu.
3. Whatever we have done to the divine race, because of heedlessness, or scant skills, or excess of power, or our sheer human nature,
o Savitar, among both the gods and the sons of Manu, impel us to be without offense here.
4. The (commandment?) of the divine Savitar is not to be violated, so that he will support all the living world.
Whatever he of the beautiful fingers impels on the expanse of earth or in the height of heaven, that of his comes true.
5. (You impel) those whose chief is Indra [=Maruts] from the lofty mountains, and you impel the dwelling places that provide homes [=clouds?] for them.
Just as they spread out while flying, just so do they stand still for your impulsion, o Savitar.
6. O Savitar, as three times a day your impulsions impel good fortune day after day,
Indra, Heaven and Earth, the Sindhu with her waters, Aditi with the Ādityas, will extend shelter to us.

IV.55 (351) All Gods

Vāmadeva Gautama
10 verses: triṣṭubh 1–7, gāyatrī 8–10

The only hymn dedicated to the All Gods in Maṇḍala IV, it is clearly a composite hymn in two different meters, divisible into 1–7, 8–10. The last three tacked-on verses are extremely simple; not so the first and more substantial part of the hymn, which is full of difficulties and uncertainties, especially in verses 2 and 6.

This first section opens with questions about identity (vs. 1): who among the gods will protect and defend us, and who (among mortals?) will provide a safe space at the sacrifice for the gods. The hymn provides a number of possible answers to the first question, starting in fact in the first verse: Heaven and Earth, Aditi, Mitra and Varuṇa. All of these recur in subsequent verses, along with others: Night and Dawn (vs. 3); Aryaman, Agni, and Indra and Viṣṇu (vs. 4); the Maruts (vs. 5); in addition to lesser divinities and powers like the Sindhu (vs. 3); Ahi Budhnya (vs. 6); and so on. It is likely that the hymn does not envisage a single answer to the question, though Aditi and the Ādityas continually surface in these verses, and Aditi, Mitra,

and Varuṇa, named in verse 1, are again named in verse 7, which forms a ring with verse 1. Although a clear answer to the first question is not given, the verses describing or invoking these named gods' help are relatively clear (3–5, in addition to 1, 7).

This leaves the second and second-to-last verses (2 and 6), symmetrically paired in this structure. In examining the hymn thus structurally, one can form the hypothesis that, since the other verses suggest answers to the first question in verse 1, these two verses provide the answer to the second question (1d): "Who will establish wide space for you at the ceremony, o gods?" Although this hypothesis does not solve all the difficulties, especially of the cryptic verse 2, it does offer a means to approach the problems. Certainly verse 2 can be interpreted as the depiction of a dawn sacrifice: the Dawns appear to be the subject of pāda b (discriminators because they mark the boundary between night and day), and the chanters of pāda a can then be the priests. Pāda c can then refer to the distribution of the dakṣiṇā, priestly gifts, at the dawn ritual, and the subjects of pāda d can be the Dawns, the gods present at the sacrifice, or the poets—or all three. The sacrificial context returns, somewhat more clearly, in verse 6, where it seems that the priests reveal the actual sacrificial substance in the same manner as the gods revealed the contents of the Vala cave (using the same verb). In both of the "sacrificial" verses, then, it seems that divine characteristics and mythical exploits are attributed to the presumably mortal participants.

If these speculations about the structure of this hymn are at all correct, it is striking that the gods are identified by name and by role quite clearly, but the ritual participants are left deliberately unclear. This may be another example of the poets' reflection on the mystical nature of the sacrifice and of the transformations it effects not only in the sacrificed substance but in the sacrificers themselves, temporarily endowing the latter with a touch of divinity.

1. Who is the protector among you (all), o good ones, who the defender? O Heaven and Earth, o Aditi—you should protect us
   from the stronger mortal, o Varuṇa and Mitra. Who will establish wide space for you at the ceremony, o gods?
2. Those [=priests?] who will chant forth the ancient ordinances while the discriminators who are never fooled [=Dawns?] will dawn widely—
   they are the untiring distributors who make distribution. The wondrous ones whose insights are truth have shone.
3. I reverently invoke the Housegoddess, Aditi, the Sindhu with chants, (invoke) divine Well-Being for comradeship.
   Night and Dawn, the undeceivable, will arrange it so that both day halves will keep guard over us.
4. Aryaman clears out a path, and Varuṇa; the lord of refreshment, Agni, (clears out) a way easy to traverse.
   Indra and Viṣṇu—when you are being praised in our manly way, hold out shelter to us and defense along with attack.
5. The help of the Mountain, of the Maruts, of the divine Protector, of Bhaga have I chosen.

The lord [=Agni? Varuṇa?] will guard us from anxiety stemming from (our own) people; Mitra from that stemming from our allies, and he should make wide space for us.

6. Now, you divine World-Halves, one should praise (you) along with Ahi Budhnya, with watery sacrifices.
   They [=priests?], desirous of gain, have revealed them [=the watery sacrifices?] gurgling like the gharma pot, (like) rivers in their converging on the sea.
7. Let goddess Aditi, with the gods, keep guard over us. Let the god Protector protect us, not keeping his distance,
   for we ought not to violate the wellspring of Mitra and Varuṇa nor the back of Agni.

8. Agni is lord of a mass of goods, Agni of great good fortune.
   He will grant these to us.
9. Bounteous, liberal Dawn, convey hither many valuables
   to us, you who are rich in prize mares.
10. So to us Savitar, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
    to us Indra—will come with generosity.

IV.56 (352) Heaven and Earth

Vāmadeva Gautama
7 verses: triṣṭubh 2–4, gāyatrī 5–7

Like the preceding hymn, this one is divided into two by meter: 1–4, 5–7; the two were presumably independent hymns originally. The first four verses mix invocations of Heaven and Earth at the current sacrifice with cosmogonic accounts of their creation (see esp. vs. 3 and its present-time counterpart in 1cd), but the ritual context is dominant. There are a number of puns. The short second hymn continues the ritual focus.

1. Let great Heaven and Earth, the preeminent ones, come to be here with their light, with their gleaming rays [/at our gleaming chants],
   when, fixing the two lofty ones apart as the widest, the bull bellows to them along the ways that spread broadly.
2. The two goddesses deserving the sacrifice, along with the gods deserving the sacrifice—they stay, not confounding (the heavenly commandments) [/not altering (their color)], growing strong [/dripping (ghee)],
   truthful, without deceit, the two whose children are the gods, the two leaders of the sacrifice with its gleaming chants [/with their gleaming rays].

3. He certainly was the good artisan among the creatures who begot these two, Heaven and Earth:
   the two wide, deep, well-fixed realms did the wise one fit together in propless (space) with his skill.
4. Now, you two World-Halves, with your lofty defenses, nurturing us in concert with (the gods) accompanied by their wives,
   protect us, o you of wide extent, who entirely deserve the sacrifice. Through our insightful thought may we be charioteers who always win.

5. We present to you two, great (Earth and) Heaven, a praise-invocation
   to be proclaimed to you two gleaming ones.
6. Purifying your own bodies mutually, you two rule each through your own skill.
   You have constantly conveyed the truth from of old.
7. You two great ones assure it success, as you further and fulfill the truth of Mitra.
   You have stationed yourself around the sacrifice.

IV.57 (353) Agricultural Divinities

Vāmadeva Gautama
8 verses: anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 6–7; triṣṭubh 2–3, 8; puraüṣṇih 5

This hymn is in a variety of meters, alternating throughout the poem, and it is dedicated to a number of different divinities related to agriculture. With its number of verses it is out of place in the collection, and its subject matter and tone are more "popular" than those of the core R̥gveda. It is not possible to determine whether the hymn we have now was assembled out of several separate hymns, but at least verses 1–3, dedicated to the Lord of the Field, hang together, though they are not metrically uniform. A curious feature in the later part of the hymn is the dual address (via a dual dvandva compound) to "Prosperity and Plow" (vss. 5, 7).

Hymns like this give us precious glimpses into everyday life and the technical terminology of particular professions. The hymn is notable also for its address to the Furrow (vs. 6, see also 7), the first appearance of the feminine noun *sī́tā*, renowned in later Sanskrit of course as the name of Rāma's noble wife in the Rāmāyaṇa.

1. By means of the Lord of the Field as if by a concluded (alliance), may we win
   what prospers the cow, the horse. He will be gracious to one such as us.
2. O Lord of the Field, as a milk-cow yields milk, milk out upon us a honeyed wave,
   dripping with honey, well-purified like ghee. Let the lords of truth be gracious to us.

3. Honeyed the plants, the heavens, the waters—honeyed let the midspace be for us.
   Let the Lord of the Field be honeyed for us. Without suffering harm may we follow after him.

4. Prosperity (be) the draft-animals, prosperity the superior men; for prosperity let the plow till.
   For prosperity let the straps be bound; for prosperity brandish the goad.
5. O Prosperity and Plow, take pleasure in this speech here. When you have made milk in heaven,
   with it besprinkle this (earth) here.
6. Become inclined our way, well-portioned Furrow. We will extol you,
   so that you will be well-portioned for us, so that you will be well-fruited for us.
7. Let Indra lay down the Furrow; let Pūṣan extend her straight.
   Let her, full of milk, yield milk to us, summer after summer.
8. For prosperity let our plowshares till through the earth; for prosperity let our plowmen advance with their draft-animals.
   Prosperity (let) Parjanya (be) with his honey and milk drinks. O Prosperity and Plow, place prosperity in us.

IV.58 (354) Ghee

Vāmadeva Gautama
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 11

The Anukramaṇī provides a bewildering variety of choices for the divinity of this hymn: Agni, or the Sun, or the waters, or the cows—or ghee (*ghṛta*), the clarified melted butter regularly used as an oblation in sacrifice. The last is clearly correct.

Ghee is here given the same type of exalted, high-style rhetorical treatment as the other crucial ritual substance, soma, with which it is also identified in this poem. Phraseology appropriate to soma is applied to the streams of ghee throughout, and, like soma, ghee becomes the focus of mystical speculations and also the subject of vivid images. It is not surprising that this significant sacrificial substance should receive such poetic glorification, especially given the importance of cows and cow imagery in the Ṛgveda.

What should really surprise us is that only this poet in this late and final hymn in just one maṇḍala should have seen fit to make ghee his subject. Soma, after all, has a whole maṇḍala of 114 hymns to itself. Grammatical accident may help account for the difference: *sóma* is grammatically masculine and thus easily personified, while *ghṛta* is grammatically neuter. However, the prominence of the cognate substance in Old Iranian (Aves. *haoma*, Old Persian *hauma*) and the existence of a lengthy praise hymn to deified Haoma in Younger Avestan (the Hōm Yašt, Yasna 9–10) testify to a long tradition of celebration of soma, which is not shared by ghee.

1. From the sea a honeyed wave has arisen; along with the (soma-)plant it has reached all the way to immortality.
   The name of Ghee that is hidden: "the tongue of the gods," "the navel of the immortal."
2. We will proclaim the name of Ghee; at this sacrifice here we will uphold it with reverences.
   The formulator will hear it as it is being announced. The four-horned buffalo [=soma] has vomited it.
3. Four are his horns, three his feet; two heads, seven hands are his.
   Triply bound, the bull keeps on roaring. The great god has entered mortals.
4. Triply deposited, being hidden by the niggards—the gods discovered the ghee in the cow.
   Indra begat one; the Sun begat one; from the seeker they fashioned one through their own power.
5. These (streams) rush from the sea found in the heart. Having a hundred barriers, they are not to be spotted by the cheat,
   but I keep gazing upon the streams of ghee. A golden reed is in their midst.
6. These nourishing liquids flow together like streams, being purified within by heart and mind.
   These waves of ghee rush, like wild beasts retreating from a javelin.
7. As if on the straightaway of a river, they fly—the youthfully exuberant ones, swift-battering, confounding the wind—
   the streams of ghee—like a ruddy prizewinning horse splitting the wooden race-course barriers [/splintering the sticks (in their current)], swelling with their waves.
8. They float—like lovely young women to (marriage) assemblies—smiling, to Agni.
   The streams of ghee approach the kindling sticks. (Agni) Jātavedas delights, taking pleasure in them.
9. I keep gazing upon them, who are like maidens smearing on unguent to go to their wedding.
   Where the soma is pressed, where the sacrifice (is performed), toward that do the streams of ghee go purifying themselves.
10. Rush toward the lovely praise hymn, to the contest for cows; on us confer auspicious chattels.
    Lead this sacrifice here to the divinities for us. The streams of ghee purify themselves like honey.
11. All the living world is firmly fixed in your domain, within the sea in your heart, within your lifespan.
    The one that was borne hither at the forefront of the waters in their joining, that one may we attain—your most honeyed wave.

Volume II

V

Maṇḍala V

Only fourteen of the eighty-seven hymns of the maṇḍala are attributed or alternately attributed to Atri himself (V.27, 37–43, 76–77, 83–86). The majority of the hymns were composed by Ātreyas, descendants of Atri, thirty-six of whom are mentioned by the Anukramaṇī in Maṇḍala V. In the Anukramaṇī's reckoning, only three of the Ātreyas—Vasuśruta (3–6), Sutambhara (11–14), and Śyāvāśva (52–59, 81–82)—composed more than one or two hymns, and only Atri himself, Śyāvāśva, and Avasyu Ātreya (31, 75) provided hymns to more than one deity or set of deities in this book. Unlike, for example, Maṇḍala III, the Viśvāmitra Family Book, the eponymous poet is thus not the major poet of Maṇḍala V. Rather, Atri is principally an ancestor, perhaps a fairly distant one, of a large family of poets. Atri appears as a figure in hymns by Ātreyas (2, 7, 15, 73, 74, 78) and in one hymn of his own (40), sometimes in reference to narratives associated with him, such as his rescue by the Aśvins (73.6, 78.4) or Atri's restoration of the sun (40.6–8). In final verses poets occasionally refer to themselves and their people as "Atris" (22.4, 39.5, 40.9, 67.5)—a plural that only occurs in the Vth Maṇḍala. In addition to Atri and Ātreyas, there are other poets from families connected to the Atris in some way. Among them are Āṅgirasa poets, to whom two hymns (15, 35) are attributed. The Āṅgirasa poets are one of the two dominant families in VIII, which also contains seven hymns ascribed to Ātreya poets (or in the case of VIII.91, a female [Ātreyī] poet). The presence of Āṅgirasa poets in V and of Ātreya poets in VIII points to the close connection between Atri poets and the Kāṇvas and Āṅgirasas. Geographically, the Atris ranged broadly from the rivers in the northwest, including the Kabul (Kubhā) and Kurram (Krumu) rivers, extending to the Yamunā in the east. Strikingly, it is the same poet, Śyāvāśva, who mentions rivers in the northwest (53.9) and the Yamunā (52.17).

The Atris and their associates address a broader range of deities in their hymns than do many of the other poetic families. The distribution is as follows: Agni (1–28), Indra (29–40), the All Gods (41–51), the Maruts (52–61), Mitra and Varuṇa (62–72), the Aśvins (73–78), Dawn (79–80), Savitar (81–82), Parjanya (83), Earth (84), Varuṇa (85), Indra and Agni (86), and the Maruts (87). The last hymn, which returns to the Maruts, is an addition to the original collection and unusual in a number of respects. Metrically it is in a long lyric meter, and thematically it features an unusual pairing of the Maruts with Viṣṇu.

The Atri Maṇḍala contains a noteworthy collection of hymns to the All Gods (41–51). A number of these feature riddles and verbal play, but none is as challenging as V.44, which Geldner called the most difficult hymn in the R̥gveda. The hymn does not name the god or gods it praises, but the very last verse mentions Agni and Soma, leaving the hearer to divine what the rest of the hymn is about. Complicating that task are lexical, syntactic, and morphological puzzles, ellipses without obvious resolution, and, above all, a likely dual reference that points to the mystery at the heart of the hymn.

The Marut cycle attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya (52–61) contains the longest sequence of hymns dedicated to these gods in the R̥gveda and is a remarkably exciting and satisfying achievement. Other hymns of note include two hymns to gods of the natural world, V.80 to Dawn and V.83 to Parjanya, the Thunderstorm. The first is the most famous and certainly one of the most beautiful of the hymns to Dawn in the R̥gveda, famed for its sensual portrayal of Dawn as a beautiful woman revealing herself to men. The latter is an energetic picture of the storm god, roaring loudly and flooding the earth. The rains are a constant theme in a number of the strongest hymns in this collection, including V.54, which vividly describes the Maruts and the storms they bring, and V.63, which rumbles repeated sounds in its praise of Mitra and Varuṇa as masters of the monsoons. The single hymn to Varuṇa in this collection, V.85, presents both a grand vision of the god as the creator of the world and a more intimate one of Varuṇa as a god who can forgive offenses and free people from them. In general, the Atri poets were at their best in describing natural phenomena, especially thunderstorms, which they both fervently desire and fear because of their power.

V.1 (355) Agni

Budha Ātreya and Gaviṣṭhira Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn describes the kindling and birth of Agni in the morning rite. In the middle section of the hymn, the poet links verses by repeating an image from the second hemistich in the opening hemistich of the next verse. So in 4d and 5a Agni as a horse is born "at the beginning of days," although in verse 4 this may be Agni as the sun, while in verse 5 Agni is clearly the sacrificial fire. Note the difference in color: the horse is "gleaming" or "white" in verse 4, but "ruddy" in verse 5. The poet almost repeats 5d in 6a, except that he has shifted the tense in 6d to a more distant past indicating the passage of time between the verses. More loosely, in 6c Agni is a sage poet (*kaví*) and in 7a an "inspired" poet (*vípra*). In 7d the priests "groom" (*mr̥janti*) Agni, imagined as a horse, and in 8a "fit to be groomed, he is groomed" (*mārjālyò mr̥jyate*). In 8d Agni is ahead (*prá* √*as*) of other fires and in 9a he goes ahead (*prá* √*i*) of other sacrificers.

Though a common metaphor, the image of Agni as a horse or a chariot-driver is treated with originality. Most strikingly, in verse 3, instead of the priests awakening Agni, Agni awakens the hymn, "the bridle" (*raśanā́*) of the horse that pulls the chariot, the sacrifice itself, while the dakṣiṇā, the sacrificial reward to the priests, is the horse. The end of the verse shifts to the metaphor of Agni as a growing child. The word for "tongues" of flame, *juhū́,* can also mean a sacrificial ladle, and this ambiguity is the basis for the ellipsis of the noun.

1. Agni has awakened by the kindling wood of the peoples in response to Dawn, approaching like a milk-cow.
   Like young (birds) rising toward a branch, his radiant beams leap forth to heaven's vault.
2. The Hotar has awakened to sacrifice to the gods. Benevolent Agni has stood tall in the early morning.
   As he is kindled, his brightening face has become visible. The great god has become free from darkness.
3. When he has awakened the bridle [=the hymn] of the (priestly) troop, blazing Agni is anointed with blazing cows [=milk].
   Then Reward is harnessed, racing toward the prize. Tall, with his tongues he suckled upon her [=the Ladle], who is stretched out.
4. Toward Agni the thoughts of those seeking the gods converge, like eyes upon the sun.
   When Dawn and Night, differing in color, give birth to him, the gleaming prizewinning steed is born at the beginning of days.
5. Since the thoroughbred has been born at the beginning of days—the ruddy one has been laid upon the laid wood—
   laying seven treasures in every house, Agni has taken his seat as the Hotar, the superior sacrificer.
6. Agni took his seat as the Hotar, the superior sacrificer, in the lap of his mother, in the wide, sweet-smelling place [=the altar]—
   he, the young poet, outstanding among many, truth-possessing, the maintainer of the peoples, and kindled in their midst.
7. Now they summon forth this inspired one bringing success in the rites, Agni the Hotar, with their acts of reverence.
   They groom with ghee their own prizewinning steed, who stretches through the two world-halves by truth.
8. Fit to be groomed, he is groomed in his own (house) as master of the house, praised by poets, our kind guest.
   A bull of a thousand horns and having its power, o Agni, you are ahead of all the other (fires) by your strength.
9. At once, Agni, you go ahead beyond the other (sacrificers), for him to whom you have become manifest as the most beloved,
   as one to be summoned, to be marveled at, far radiant, the dear guest of the clans of the sons of Manu.

10. To you, o youngest Agni, the peoples bring tribute from near and far.
    Attend to the favor of the most fortunate (sacrificer)! Lofty and great is your propitious shelter, o Agni.
11. Today mount your radiant chariot, o radiant Agni, that is shared with the (gods), fit recipients of sacrifice.
    Knowing the paths, convey the gods here across the wide midspace for them to consume the offerings.
12. We have spoken an extolling speech to the wise poet, the bull-strong bull.
    With reverence Gaviṣṭhira has rested his praise song in Agni, as if resting the wide-spreading golden disk in heaven.

V.2 (356) Agni

Kumāra Ātreya or Vr̥śa Jāna or both
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 12

Geldner provides a long introduction to this hymn and concludes that it deals with the disappearance of the fire-god Agni as if he were a household or ritual fire that has suddenly gone out or a newly churned or kindled fire that does not emerge. More specifically, we suggest, it may have been composed as a prāyaścitti or expiation for a sacrificial fire that has gone out as offerings were poured into it and to accompany a rite of restoring the fire.

In verses 1–2 the hidden child is Agni. The young mother (vs. 1) and wet nurse (vs. 2) could be the firewood (*samídh* fem.) that keeps the fire hidden, and the chief wife, the *máhiṣī*, who gave birth to Agni, may be a fire-churning stick (*aráṇī* fem.). Yet in verse 1 the poet assures himself that Agni will emerge and take his ritual place to the east as he usually does. The poet sees Agni far away from his place in the rite (vss. 3–4), but who is this Agni? Is he other fires, or, as we think more likely, the sun, moving from the east toward the west? Verse 5 offers syntactic challenges—the masculine *yéṣām* and the sense of *ná*... *cid*—but the cattle or bulls of Agni that it mentions may be the flames (*arká* or *arcí* masc.?) that the poets hopes the god will drive to the sacrificial place. Agni should find release from the powers who would deny the fire to the poet and his peoples (vs. 6), and thus should release the sacrificers from whatever limits them (vs. 7). However, Agni has departed the sacrificial place in anger—a fact that one of the gods, perhaps Indra or Varuṇa or conceivably even Agni himself, has made plain. But Indra knows where Agni is and has guided the sacrificers so that they may recover him (vs. 8). Ultimately, nothing can keep Agni from the sacrificers, as the presence of Agni as the sun in heaven shows (vss. 9–10), and he will honor the command of the gods to help the sacrificer (vs. 12).

Geldner also summarizes a narrative later connected to this hymn, mentioned in Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa XIII 3.12, Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa III 94, Br̥haddevatā V

12–23 and given also by Sāyaṇa. According to the version of the Bṛhaddevatā, King Tryaruṇa was riding in a chariot driven by his purohita Vṛśa Jāna. A brahmin boy was killed by the chariot, and the king blamed the purohita. Vṛśa brought the boy back to life, but then stormed away in anger because of the king's accusation. When the purohita departed, however, so did the fury of the king's sacrificial fire and with it the ability of the fire to cook the oblations. Therefore the king went to Vṛśa and persuaded him to return as his purohita and to restore the fire's fury. When he came back, Vṛśa found that a Piśācī woman in the king's house had taken the fury of the king's fire. But by reciting V.2.9 Vṛśa caused the fury to return and to burn the Piśācī woman. As Geldner rightly concludes, this story draws on elements of the hymn, but the hymn is surely not based on it.

1. In secret the young mother carries the child who is swaddled; she does not give him to his father.
   His face is not one that changes (its face): the peoples see it in front, set down in the circle of spokes.
2. Young woman, who is this child whom you carry as his wet nurse? The chief wife has given birth to him,
   for the embryo grew strong through many autumns, and I saw him (newly) born, when his mother bore him.
3. I saw him with golden teeth and flaming color far away from his homeland, showing the measure of his weapons,
   as I gave to him my immortal (soma) without impurity. What can those without Indra, without recitations, do to me?
4. I saw him moving from his homeland into the distance, going in beauty in many ways like a herd (moving) together.
   They did not keep hold of him. Because he has been born, the young women become gray.
5. Who will keep my little young blood separate from the cattle, which have never had a stranger as their herdsman?
   They who have kept hold of him, let them release him. The watchful one will drive the animals to us.
6. Hostilities have set down the king of dwellings, the dwelling place of the peoples, among mortals.
   Let the formulations of Atri release him. Let them who scorn become those to be scorned.
7. You loosed even Śunaḥśepa, who was bound, from his thousand (bonds), from the sacrificial post, since he exhausted himself (in sacrifice).
   So unloose the fetters from us, o Agni, watchful Hotar, after having taken your seat here.
8. Because, becoming angry, you had gone from me, the protector of the commandments of the gods announced (that) to me.
   Because the knowing Indra has kept you in his sights, instructed by him have I come here, o Agni.

9. Agni radiates in all directions with a lofty light. He makes visible all things by his greatness.
   He overpowers ungodly guiles and those of evil ways. He sharpens his horns to pierce through the demonic.
10. And in heaven let there be the roars of Agni with their sharp weapons to smash the demonic.
   Even in his elation his (furious) radiance breaks forth. Ungodly evasions will not hinder him.
11. This praise song for you, o you who are powerfully born, have I, the inspired poet, fashioned as a clever artisan (fashions) a chariot.
   If, Agni, you will gladly receive that very (song), o god, thereby we would win the waters together with the sun.
12. "The bull of powerful neck, having become full-grown, will drive together unchallenged the possessions of the stranger,"
   thus the immortals have spoken to this Agni here. He will offer protection to Manu bearing ritual grass; he will offer protection to Manu bearing offerings.

V.3 (357) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn opens with identifications of Agni with the Ādityas—Varuṇa and Mitra in verse 1 and Aryaman and Mitra in verse 2. The reason for these identifications is not immediately clear, and indeed in various ways the poet also marshals the presence of other gods: Indra in verse 1, the Maruts, Viṣṇu, and Rudra in verse 3, and all the gods again in verse 1. After invoking the presence of the gods, the poet then describes the installation of the sacrificial fire (vss. 4–5). In verses 6–7 he asks that the presence of the sacrificial fire also mark the presence of Agni's help against those who are offending against his people and himself. He mentions evil speech (vs. 7) and curses brought against its speaker (vss. 7, 12) and also against thieves and cheats (vs. 11) threatening him. He therefore asks the god for rescue (vs. 9). This concern explains the prominence of the Ādityas at the beginning of the hymn, since they are the gods who oversee social relations among humans and therefore can protect against people who seek to harm others.

1. You, o Agni, are Varuṇa when you are born. You become Mitra when you are kindled.
   In you are the all the gods, o son of strength. You are Indra for the pious mortal.
2. You become Aryaman when you belong to young girls (at marriage). You bear a secret name, o you of independent will.

They anoint (you as) Mitra with cows [=milk/butter], like a well-established (ally), when you make the lord and lady of the household to be of one mind.

3. For your splendor the Maruts groomed themselves, o Rudra, when you came to beloved, shimmering birth.
   The track of Viṣṇu that was set down as the highest, by that you protect the secret name of the cows.
4. By the splendor of you (who are lovely to see), the gods are lovely to see, o god. Receiving many things for themselves, they serve the immortal one.
   The fire-priests have seated Agni as the Hotar of Manu, giving homage to him as the "Recitation of Āyu."
5. No ancient Hotar was a better sacrificer than you, o Agni. There is no one higher in poetic arts, o you of independent will.
   One belonging to the clan of which you will become a guest will vanquish mortals through the sacrifice, o god.
6. Helped by you, o Agni, we would vanquish mortals—we, striving after goods and awakening with our offering;
   we, in the competition and in the ritual distributions of the days; we, with our wealth, o son of strength.
7. The one who will bring offense or blame against us—all of you: set evil upon him, the speaker of evil.
   O watchful Agni, smash this curse (of him) who harms us with duplicity.
8. At the dawning of this (dawn), o god, the ancients, making you their messenger, offered you sacrifice with oblations,
   when, o Agni, you speed amid the gathering of riches as the god being kindled by mortals and by the good (gods).
9. Fight! since you know how. Rescue your father [=the priest], who considers himself your son, o son of strength!
   Watchful one, when will you look toward us? O Agni, when will you, perceiving the truth, take your place?
10. Your father sets many names (on you) as he sings praises, good one, if you will find pleasure in this.
    Desiring this, Agni will gain (divine) favor (for us) with the strength of a god, having become full grown, will he not?
11. Certainly, o youngest Agni, carry the singer beyond all difficulties.
    Thieves have appeared and cheating peoples. Devious ones of unknown intention have come.
12. These pleas have come toward you, or rather this very offense has been spoken to (you), the good one.
    Having become full grown, this Agni here will not betray us to the curse nor to him doing harm.

V.4 (358) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

In this hymn the poet sets forth what we—the poet and the other sacrificers—will do and receive within the frame of what Agni, typically addressed in the 2nd person, will accomplish. The poet draws attention to "we" and "you" by fronting the personal pronouns and using their non-enclitic forms. He announces this strategy in the first verse, which begins with *tvā́m* "you," and then the following verses largely describe Agni as the sacrificial fire, who conveys the oblations to the gods (vs. 2) and the gods to the oblations (vs. 4). Verses 5 and especially 6, the omphalos verse, mark a thematic movement from the sacrificial fire that serves the gods to the fire that mortals serve and that serves mortals. In verse 7 the first word of each pāda and in verse 8 the first word of each hemistich is "we" or "us." Enclitic and non-enclitic forms of the 1st-person plural pronoun also occur in verses 9 and 10, and in verse 10 the poet personalizes the verse even more deeply by using 1st-person singular verbs: *jóhavīmi* "I repeatedly invoke" and *aśyām* "may I attain." The last verse abandons the 1st person altogether, instead referring to the recipient of Agni's favor as "he," and with *tvám* "you" in the first pāda, it returns to the initial focus on Agni.

1. In you, o Agni, goods-lord of goods, I find elation at the rites, o king.
   Through you we would win victory's prize, racing to the prize. We would prevail against the battle-charges of mortals.
2. Conveying our oblations, unaging Agni is our father, the one far-reaching, far-radiant, and lovely to see among us.
   Illuminate fully the refreshments of a well-run household. Mete out full measures of fame in our direction.
3. The poet of the clans, the clanlord of the (clans) of the sons of Manu, blazing, purifying, ghee-backed Agni—
   him have you all installed as the Hotar knowing all things. He will win desirable rewards among the gods.
4. Take pleasure, o Agni, along with the libation, aligning with the rays of the sun.
   Take pleasure in our kindling wood, o Jātavedas, and convey the gods here to eat the oblations.
5. As the pleasing lord of the house and the guest in the home, journey to this our sacrifice since you are the knowing one.
   Having smashed to pieces all attacks, o Agni, bring here the sustenance of those challenging us.
6. With your weapon send the Dasyu into hiding, while creating vigor for your own body,
   and thus protect us when the prize is at stake, o Agni, best of men, since you bring the gods safely across, o child of strength.

7. *We* would do you honor, o Agni, with our recitations; we, with our oblations, o pure one of auspicious flame.
   For us speed wealth that fulfills all wishes; for us grant all goods.
8. Take pleasure in *our* rite, o Agni, son of strength with three abodes, and in our oblation.
   May we be those acting rightly toward the gods. Protect us by your shelter with its three defenses.
9. Carry us across all difficult depths and difficult ways, o Jātavedas, as if across a river by a boat.
   O Agni, being sung with reverence as if by Atri, become the helper of *our* bodies.
10. Thinking with a simple heart, I, a mortal, who repeatedly invoke you, an immortal—
    among us grant glory, o Jātavedas. May I attain immortality through offspring, o Agni.
11. For whom you will make a wide, comfortable place, o Jātavedas, since he acts rightly toward you, o Agni,
    he will attain a wealth of horses, sons, heroes, and cattle for his well-being.

V.5 (359) Āprī

Vasuśruta Ātreya
11 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn follows the usual sequence of the Āprī litany, although it omits the normal explicit reference to the barhis, the ritual grass, in verse 4. Until the very end of the hymn, the poet uses the imperative except in verse 2, which has the subjunctive, and in verse 6, in which he announces that he is beseeching Evening and Dawn but does not directly state what he wishes to occur. However, he implies a request for strength by calling the two deities *vayovṛ́dh* "increasing vigor." The last verse, however, shows a decided shift that is signaled by the complete absence of a verb. Through the repetition of the ritual call *svā́hā*, the verse marks the moment at which the priest makes the offering that should culminate or accomplish all the things urged before.

1. To the well-*kindled* flame offer sharp ghee,
   to Agni Jātavedas.
2. The undeceivable *Narāśaṃsa* will sweeten this sacrifice,
   for he is the poet with honey in his hands.
3. When *invoked*, o Agni, convey here dear shimmering Indra
   with his easy running chariots, to help us.
4. Having the softness of wool, spread widely, (o *ritual grass*): the chants have cried out to you.
   Be here to win gain for us, beautiful one.

5. Divine *doors*, gape open, giving easy access to help us.
   Fill the sacrifice, further and further.
6. The two of beautiful appearance, increasing vigor, the young mothers of truth,
   Evening and Dawn—them we beseech.
7. On the wind's flight let the two *divine Hotars* of Manu, being invoked,
   come to this our sacrifice.
8. Iḍā, Sarasvatī, and Mahī, the three *goddesses* who are joy itself—
   let them, unfailing, sit upon the ritual grass.
9. *Tvaṣṭar*, come here as the kind one, far-ranging in the prosperity (you bring), and in your own person
   help us at every sacrifice.
10. Where you know, o *Lord of the Forest*, to be the hidden names of the gods,
    there make our oblations go.
11. *Svāhā* to Agni and to Varuṇa, *svāhā* to Indra and to the Maruts,
    svāhā to the gods—the offering!

V.6 (360) Agni

Vasuśruta Ātreya
10 verses: paṅkti

The hymn is dominated by references to prizewinning horses. In verse 3 Agni gives the prizewinner, which may be Agni himself. In pāda d of the verse, therefore, the one who "journeys to what is valued" is Agni both as a god retrieving the reward for the sacrificers and as a metaphoric horse racing to the prize. Again in verse 7 Agni's flames are horses and the prize toward which they strive is cattle, first mentioned in verse 1, along with horses. Allusion to horses is indirect in verse 10, but in 10ab the priests "guide" Agni—assuming with Geldner and Renou that *ajuryamur* is haplology for *ajuryáṃ yamur*—as they might guide a horse. Then in d they hope for an "abundance of heroes and *this* abundance of swift horses." There are various possible explanations for why the poet speaks of *tyád* "this" abundance. One is that there is a comparison between the horses they hope to gain and Agni's flames imagined as horses. If so, then "this abundance" would mean an abundance of horses equivalent to the present abundance of flames.

1. I think of Agni, who is the good one, to whom milk-cows go home,
   swift chargers (go) home, and our own prizewinners (go) home.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
2. He is Agni, who is sung as the good one, whom the milk-cows approach together,
   the fast-running chargers (approach) together, and well-born patrons (approach) together.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.

3. Since Agni, who belongs to all domains, gives the prizewinner [=Agni?] to the clan,
   (since) Agni (gives the prizewinner) that is very ready for wealth, when pleased, he journeys to what is valued.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
4. Agni, here would we kindle your brilliant and unaging (flame), o god,
   so that this your kindling stick, admired more, will shine in heaven.
   – Bring here refreshment for the praise singers.
5. Agni, for you the offering is poured here, accompanied by our verse, o lord of the glistening flame,
   beautifully shimmering, wondrous clanlord, and conveyor of oblations.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
6. And these fires are at the forefront among fires. They foster everything of value.
   They hasten it; they speed it; they drive it onward in proper order.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
7. These flames of yours, o Agni, are greatly arrogant prizewinners,
   which, by the soaring of their hooves, dart toward the double enclosures of the cows.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
8. Agni, bring the new ones here to us, the praise singers—(those) refreshments and good settlements.
   We would be those who have recited verses, those having you as our messenger in every house.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
9. O you who are beautifully shimmering, you make the two spoonsful of melted butter ready within your mouth,
   and so you should fill us (with plenty) at our hymns, o lord of vast power.
   – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.
10. Thus they *have guided the *unaging Agni with songs and sacrifices in proper order.
    He will grant to us an abundance of heroes and this abundance of swift horses.
    – Bring refreshment for the praise singers.

V.7 (361) Agni

Iṣa Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 10

At the beginning (vss. 1–3) the poet repeats the word *sám* “together” alone or in compounds. The first pāda draws particular attention to the word with its repetition

of *sa(m)*: ***sákhāyaḥ sáṃ** vaḥ **sam**yáñcam.* In the middle verses (4, 5, 7, 8) *sám* is echoed by the particle *smā/sma* "again," or more exactly "as always." The last verse (10) is in a different meter, and, marked by its opening *íti* "with these words," it stands outside of the main body of the poem. The real concluding verse, therefore, is verse 9, in which *sám* is echoed again, this time by *śám* "luck." The one verse in which neither *sám* nor one of its echo words occurs (6) is actually a dependent clause that is completed by verses 7–8. The sound repetitions thematically link the union (*sám*) of both the priests and the offerings, the return of Agni (*sma/smā*), and finally the good luck (*śám*) that the sacrifice will bring to Agni and the benefit that Agni will bring to both gods and humans.

As mentioned above, the poet extends a statement across three verses (6–8). This highly unusual construction marks the climax of the hymn, which describes the moment when Agni "streams forth." Indeed, the extended statement even iconically suggests the extension of the sacrificial fire as it creeps throughout the wood. However, this strategy creates challenging syntax: verse 6 is a relative clause describing Agni, verse 7 a causal clause that explains how it is that Agni is a homeland for Āyu and his descendants, and verse 8 concludes with the appearance of Agni.

Finally, one philological explanation: in verse 7 we read *ákṣitam* rather than *ā́kṣitam* with the Padapāṭha.

1. O companions, (unite) together your united refreshment and praise
   to Agni,
   to the highest (dweller) of the dwellings, to the child of nourishment
   endowed with strength,
2. At the encounter together with whom, wherever it be, delighting men
   [=priests] (unite) in the session of men [=the sacrifice]
   and whom even the worthy (gods) kindle and our folk bring to birth.
3. When we get together the refreshments and together the oblations of the
   sons of Manu,
   he for his part has taken the rein of truth with the vast power of his
   brilliance.
4. Again he makes a beacon here, even during the night, for him who is
   far away,
   when he, the pure one, again diminishes the lords of the forest (into ash),
   himself unaging.
5. In whose service they again pour down their sweat upon his paths,
   they have mounted this land of his own noble birth like the backs (of
   horses).
6. The much coveted one whom the mortal finds in order that he suckle
   everyone [=both gods and mortals],
   (the one who is) the sweetening of foods and also the homeland for Āyu,
7. Because like a mower, he again mows the uninhabitable wasteland like a
   grazing animal—

he of golden beard and blazing teeth, the craftsman whose might is never blunted—

8. Him his mother bore bearing easily, when she successfully obtained the good fortune (of Agni's birth),
(for the sacrificer), for whom, as for Atri, blazing (Agni) again streams forth like an axe.
9. (For the sacrificer), who is luck for you so that you suckle (everyone), o Agni, o you having butter as your soma-drink,
establish brilliance and fame here among these mortals, (establish) insight here.
10. With just these words, I take the battle-fury of Adhrij, the (sacrificial) animal given by you.
Then, o Agni, Atri should overpower the Dasyus, who never give; Iṣa should overpower men [=other sacrificers].

V.8 (362) Agni

Iṣa Ātreya
7 verses: jagatī

The poet begins each verse with the object phrase *tvā́m agne* "you, o Agni," except verse 5, which subtly breaks the pattern by beginning *tvám agne*, with the nominative subject pronoun instead of the accusative. Thematically the hymn emphasizes the roles of Agni as the fire of the household, of the clan, and of the clans collectively. The poet remembers that the ancestors kindled Agni (vss. 1–2), that their descendants, the present clans, continue to do so now (vs. 3), and that through Agni they gain sustenance (vs. 5).

1. You, o Agni, did the truth-seekers kindle—the ancients (kindled) the ancient one—for your help, o you made with strength,
(you) the much-glittering, all-nurturing one worthy of the sacrifice, the desirable master of the household, lord of the house.
2. You, o Agni, did they seat as the first guest of the clan, as the lord of the house with blazing hair,
with lofty beacon and many forms, winning back the stakes, offering good protection and good help, striving to bring (mortals) to old age.
3. You, o Agni, do the clans of Manu's sons invoke as the one knowing priestly offices, discriminating, and best granting treasures,
being in hiding yet visible to all, o you who bring good fortune, resounding mightily, sacrificing well, and having ghee as your splendor.
4. You, o Agni, the steadfast one, have we always approached with homage, singing with our songs.

Being kindled, find pleasure in our (songs), o Aṅgiras—(you) a god (in those) of a mortal—with a glorious (fire?), with your bright lights.

5. You, o Agni, with your many forms establish vitality for every clan in your ancient way, o you much praised.
   By your strength you rule over many foods. When you have flared, that flare of yours is not to be challenged.
6. You, o Agni, o youngest one, did the gods make their messenger, the conveyor of the oblations, when you were kindled.
   They have established you of wide expanse, having your birthplace in ghee, anointed (with ghee), as the flaring eye that propels thought.
7. You, o Agni, anointed with ghee from of old, have those seeking your favor kindled with good kindling.
   Having become fully grown and increased by the plants, you spread over the earthly expanses.

V.9 (363) Agni

Gaya Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

The poet has taken special pains to link one verse to the next. Verses 2–3 form a single statement with two relative clauses joined by the marked conjunction *utá*. Verses 3–4 both begin with the same words *utá sma* "And . . . again," and verse 5 also begins with a similar and conjunctive *ádha sma* "Then . . . again." The final pāda also begins with *utá,* but sounds almost like an afterthought. Its seeming superfluity calls attention to it as an addition and thereby also to the serial concatenation across the hymn's verses.

Less clear is the purpose that such concatenation serves. One possibility is that this structure is a verbal icon of various kinds of ritual strings. Thus it might reflect the poet's request in the first verse that Agni "convey our oblations in proper order." That is, the connection of verses one to another might anticipate the connected sequence of offerings made into the fire. Or it might reflect the convergences of sacrifices, sacrificial rewards, and sacrificial participants at the rite, all mentioned in verse 2, or the union of Agni's flames, amplified by the image of metals smelted together in verse 5. Or it might even indicate the alliance between gods and humans signified by the appearance of Agni as Mitra, the god of alliances, in verse 6. Or all of the above.

1. You, Agni, a god, do mortals summon, bearing offerings.
   I think you to be Jātavedas: convey our oblations in proper order.
2. Agni is the Hotar of the dwelling rich in gifts, in which the ritual grass is twisted,
   upon whom sacrifices converge and the prizes and seekers of fame (converge);

3. And to whom the churning stick has again given birth like a new calf—
   Agni, the supporter of the clans of the sons of Manu, performing good rites.
4. And like a son of twisting (snakes) you are again hard to grasp,
   you, who are the consumer of much wood, o Agni, like a grazing animal in a pasture (consuming much grass).
5. Then he whose smoky flames all together join together—
   when Trita in heaven blows upon him like a blower [=smelter] (of metals), he becomes sharp as if at the blowing (of bellows).
6. By your help, o Agni, and through my proclamations of (Agni as) Mitra, would I—
   would *we* cross over difficulties of mortals, as those repelling hatred do.
7. Let our men (be) dominant over wealth, o Agni. Bring that here, o strong one!
   He makes us dwell in peace; he makes us thrive; he comes in order (for us) to gain the prize of victory. And let him be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.10 (364) Agni

Gaya Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4, 7

Oldenberg (1897: 390) remarks that this hymn "seems to stand parallel with" the preceding hymn, which is attributed to the same poet. The hymn comprises a direct and energetic plea for wealth both for those chanting praise songs and for their patrons, their *sūrí*s, explicitly mentioned in verses 3 and 6. In verse 3 it is not clear whether "patrons" and "men" refer to patrons and priests or whether "men" is in apposition to patrons, and then in verse 4, whether those beautifying the songs are patrons or priests or both. If both, which we think most likely, then the "gifts of horses" could refer to actual horses that patrons bring and metaphoric horses, the songs that priests offer.

The hymn is marked by repeated pointing at Agni as the one who can and should bring this wealth. So verses 2, 3, and 7 all begin with a 2nd-person pronoun followed immediately by an address to Agni: "You, o Agni!" In verse 2 there is a progression from Agni's will to sacrifice, to his skill to do so, and finally to his "effective action" in performing the rite, at which point he becomes "worthy of the sacrifice," that is, both worthy to perform his priest's role and worthy to receive offerings as a god.

1. O Agni, who are never poor, bring here the most powerful brilliance to us.
   With wealth and abundance, cut a path to victory's prize for us.

2. You, o undeceiving Agni! By your will, by your readiness of skill for us,
   and by your effective action—upon you has lordliness mounted—you
   are worthy of the sacrifice, like Mitra.
3. You, o Agni! Increase for us the household and prosperity of these,
   our patrons (and) our men, who have obtained rewards through
   praise songs,
4. Who with their gifts of horses, o shimmering Agni, beautify songs
   for you—
   (these) men, spirited with high spirits, whose acclaim (rises) more loftily
   even than heaven. In person he [=Agni] attends (to them).
5. These flashing flames of yours, o Agni, go boldly,
   like earth-encircling lightning bolts, their sound like a chariot chasing
   the prize of victory.
6. Now, (bring us wealth) to help us, o Agni, and to give to the zealous one,
   and for our patrons to pass safely through all regions.
7. You, o Agni, o Aṅgiras, having been praised and being praised, bring us
   wealth that overwhelms the wide-reaching one, for your praisers and for
   us to praise (you), o Hotar. And be present for us to grow strong in
   battles.

V.11 (365) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: jagatī

As in the previous hymn, there is an energetic pointing to Agni, who is insistently named at the beginning of each pāda in verse 4 and addressed in the 2nd person at the beginning of 5abc and 6a, d. There is also an emphasis on Agni's expanse: his radiance (vs. 1) and his smoke (vs. 3) touch heaven; he is a visible beacon (vss. 2, 3); he is present in every household (vs. 4); he is filled with vast power (*śávas*, vs. 5); and he even extends backward in time all the way to the first man, Vivasvant (vs. 3). The description of Agni as shining for the Bharatas (vs. 1) may explain why there is this emphasis on his expanse. The Agni of this hymn may be the tribal fire of the Bharatas, and therefore the poet wishes to emphasize Agni's presence among all the people of the Bharatas and the extent of the Bharatas' territory or power.

1. The herdsman of the people has been born, the awakened, well-skilled
   Agni, for a new safe passage.
   His face covered with ghee, blazing (Agni) radiates brilliantly for the
   Bharatas with lofty (radiance) that touches heaven.
2. As the beacon of their sacrifice, as the foremost one placed to the fore,
   men have kindled Agni in his threefold abode.

On the same chariot with Indra and the gods, he of strong resolve sits down on the ritual grass as Hotar to perform the sacrifice.

3. Though ungroomed, you are born blazing in your two mothers [=the fire-churning sticks]. As the delighting poet of Vivasvant, you rose up.
   They made you grow strong with ghee, o (ghee-)anointed Agni. Your smoke became a beacon, resting upon heaven.
4. Let Agni successfully pursue our sacrifice. Agni do men distribute in every house.
   Agni became their messenger, conveying the oblations. Choosing Agni, they choose him who possesses a poet's purpose.
5. For you, Agni, let this most honey-filled speech, for you let this inspired thinking be a joy for your heart.
   You do the songs fill with vast power, like great streams the river [=the Sindhu], and (you) do they make strong.
6. You, Agni, did the Aṅgirases find, though you were hidden in secret, resting in every piece of wood.
   Being churned, you are born to great strength. You they call the child of strength, o Aṅgiras.

V.12 (366) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn repeatedly asserts that the poet is speaking the truth (*ṛtá*), and therefore, since Agni himself speaks the truth (vs. 3) and attends to the truth (vs. 2), he should attend to the poet and grant his wishes. In verse 5 the poet contrasts himself and his truth-speaking with those who were apparently once his allies, whose words and whose attacks against him are now twisted and false. The questions in 4bcd are ironic, for in fact Agni offers no protection to a lying cheat. Pāda 4a might also be taken ironically or not: the bonds (*bándhana*) could be the bonds of friendship with Agni—in its other two Ṛgvedic attestations the word means "connection" in a neutral or positive sense—or they could be the fetters that the poet clearly hopes are the cheat's reward.

1. Forth to lofty Agni, worthy of the sacrifice, to the bull of truth, the lord, do (I bring) my thought,
   well purified in my mouth at the sacrifice like ghee (in Agni's mouth);
   I bring (forth) my song to be face-to-face with the bull.
2. O you attentive to the truth, attend to just the truth. Bore through to the many streams of truth.
   I do not (serve) the sorcerer by strength nor by duplicity; I serve the truth of the flame-red bull.

3. In what fashion, o Agni, do you, speaking the truth according to the truth, become aware of our newer speech?
   The god who is rites-guardian of the rites' sequence knows of me; I do not (know) a lord other than him, the winner of wealth here.
4. What bonds do you have for the cheat, Agni? What brilliant protectors will keep winning gain (for him)?
   Which ones protect the wellspring of untruth, o Agni? What herdsmen are there for false speech?
5. These inconstant companions of yours, Agni, though they used to be kind, have become unkind.
   These have injured themselves by their words, speaking twisted things against him who goes straight.
6. The one who summons you to the sacrifice with homage, o Agni, protects the truth of the flame-red bull.
   For him let there come a dwelling place, wide and bringing success, (and also) the posterity of Nahuṣa, who is spreading in every direction.

V.13 (367) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Like the previous hymn, which is also attributed to Sutambhara, this hymn emphasizes the praise song offered to Agni, which causes Agni to grow and to perform the sacrifice as the Hotar. The course of the hymn follows that growth of Agni. In verse 1 the sacrificers are just beginning to kindle Agni. He then spreads wide (vs. 4) and is made strong (vs. 5), until finally, in the last verse, he encompasses the gods.

1. Chanting, we invoke you; chanting, we would kindle you,
   chanting, o Agni, for your help.
2. For Agni we will conceive a praise song, an effective one today for him who touches heaven,
   for the god, as we seek goods.
3. Agni is pleased at our songs—he the Hotar, who is here among the sons of Manu.
   He will perform sacrifice to the divine race.
4. You, o Agni, are spread wide as the pleasing Hotar to be chosen.
   Through you they stretch out the sacrifice.
5. You, o Agni, best prizewinner, do the inspired poets make strong when you are well praised.
   Give us an abundance of heroes.
6. O Agni, like a rim the spokes, you surround the gods.
   I reach toward your shimmering generosity.

V.14 (368) Agni

Sutambhara Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

As in his previous two hymns Sutambhara emphasizes the power of the praise song to awaken Agni. Here he fronts the name of Agni (vss. 1, 4–6) or a pronoun referring to Agni (vss. 2, 3) in every verse. Verses 2–3 are not so much exceptions as a variation of the structure of the other verses. These two verses form a single statement that withholds the name "Agni" until it is fronted in their last pāda, 3c. Then verse 4 and the following verses pick up "Agni" and continue with it as the first word in the verse.

1. Agni—awaken him with a praise song, kindling the immortal one.
   He will place our oblations among the gods.
2. Him they invoke in the rites—mortals (invoke) the immortal one,
   the god—
   to be the best sacrificer among the people of Manu,
3. Because him do they invoke one after another with a spoon dripping
   with ghee, him the god
   Agni, to convey the oblation.
4. Agni shone as soon as he was born, smashing Dasyus and darkness with
   his light.
   He found the cows, the waters, and the sun.
5. Agni, to be invoked as our poet—serve him, ghee-backed!
   Let him—he will hear!—track my summons.
6. Agni, governing all territories, have they increased with ghee and
   praise songs
   of good insight and eloquence.

V.15 (369) Agni

Dharuṇa Āṅgirasa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Elizarenkova (1995: 152) calls *dharúṇa* "support" the "magic word" of this hymn, since this word is repeated and echoed by other derivatives of √*dhṛ* or by similar sounding words. By attributing the hymn to Dharuṇa, the Anukramaṇī implies that the poet is playing on his name, although it is likely that the Anukramaṇī derives the name of the poet from the repetition of this word. The purpose of this repetition of *dharúṇa* is to underscore the role of Agni as the "supporter of wealth, the support of goods" (vs. 1). The name of Agni is postponed to the very end of the line of this first verse and then is never mentioned again, although echoing Agni the next to last word of the hymn is the name of Atri.

The rest of the hymn presents a number of linguistic and exegetical problems, and this translation accepts the minor emendation in verse 4c of *jarase* to *járase* proposed by Oldenberg. The second verse is particularly mysterious and the translation does not fully unravel it. Geldner suggests that the unnamed subjects are the Aṅgirases, ancient singers, who established the truth as the foundation of the sacrifice in heaven and who, together with their "born" sons, attained the "unborn" Ādityas or the gods generally. We offer another view in the translation. In this interpretation, the subjects are priests, who by the truth of their words support the truth that is the rightly performed sacrifice, which itself is a support, the support of the gods. The priests support the sacrifice by placing it on its support, the heavenly ideal of the sacrifice. In doing so they also support the gods, who gather at the earthly sacrifice, the foundation of heaven. In this way the priests attained the unborn gods by means of their sacrificial fires that have been "born." To be sure, like much else in this verse, the identification of those "born" is uncertain, but note that the bodies of Agni, the different sacrificial fires, are mentioned in verse 3 and that also in this verse the ancient Agni, this time in the singular, is "newly born."

In verse 5, as Geldner rightly notes, the image is from racing. The beckoning prize of victory maintains the diminishing strength of the racer. In the sacrificial context the prize may be Agni's reward, the offerings of melted butter that revive the flagging fire. Thus according to the latter half of the verse, the fire hides within the wood, but after it is revived, it appears again majestically.

1. I bring forth my song to the ritual master and poet worth finding, to the glorious ancient one.
   Seated in ghee is the very kind lord, the supporter of wealth, the support of goods, Agni.
2. By truth they [=the priests] support truth, the support, on the powerful (support) of the sacrifice in the highest heaven,
   and (support) the superior men [=the gods], who have sat down on the support at the foundation of heaven—they who have attained the ones unborn by those born.
3. They stretch out the bodies (of Agni), which keep away confinement, and great vitality, hard to surpass, for the ancient one.
   Though newly born, he would cross the boundaries (of the fireplace), but all around they hem him in, who is like a raging lion.
4. When, spreading, like a mother you carry more and more peoples to be suckled and to see,
   and when *you awaken, acquiring more and more vitality, you go all around with varying forms in your single person.
5. Now let the prize of victory protect the limit of your strength as you give as your milk broad support for wealth.
   Hiding your track like a thief, then appearing greatly for wealth, you have rescued Atri.

V.16 (370) Agni

Pūru Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This and the following hymn are attributed to the same poet, and indeed the two hymns show many parallels: they have the same meter and the same number of verses, and their concluding pāda is identical. Geldner notes that this hymn, like many of the Agni hymns of this maṇḍala, uses rare and affected expressions. Certainly the syntax in this hymn is challenging, especially in verses 3–4, whose complex construction marks the climax of the hymn. The two verses describe the point at which Agni is burning most brightly. At that moment he has become the powerful ally and benefactor of the sacrificers, and at that moment Agni shines beyond both heaven and earth.

Both in these verses and elsewhere in the hymn the poet emphasizes the alliance among Agni, the priests, and their patrons. In verse 1, for example, the expression *mitrám̐ ná* compares Agni to Mitra, the god of alliances, and simultaneously compares him to a *mitrá*, an ally. The first is the primary sense, as it is elsewhere, here especially because the hymn refers to Bhaga, another of the Ādityas, in verse 2.

1. Because there is lofty vitality for radiance, chant to the god Agni,
   whom mortals have installed to the fore, like Mitra, with their
   proclamations.
2. Because he is the Hotar of the peoples in the arms of skill throughout
   the days,
   Agni allots the oblation in the proper sequence, like Bhaga a wish.
3. At our praise of this generous one and in our companionship with him
   full-flamed,
   our mightily roaring compatriot, in whom all (beings) have placed
   unbridled strength—
4. For then, o Agni, (you are) ready to give abundant heroes to these (your
   companions)—
   the two world-halves do not encompass him, though youthful, nor his fame.
5. Now come to us! Being sung, o Agni, bring here a desirable reward
   to us and our patrons, who together will receive well-being.
   – And be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.17 (371) Agni

Pūru Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

A striking image in this hymn is that of the mouth—the mouth of Agni, who receives the offerings, and the mouth of the priest, who recites the hymns. The poet

associates or even identifies these mouths in verse 2 by using *ásya* "of this one," to refer to either Agni or the priest, and in verse 5, where the mouth is equally that of Agni and that of the priest. The poet insists on these two mouths because they are the means by which the patron of the sacrifice can think himself glorious (vs. 2). In verse 3, however, the poet refers only to the mouth of Agni and shifts to a sexual image. The "thrust" could be the thrust of the poet's song or it could be the thrust of the fire-churning. Because it carries a sexual connotation, line c then describes the semen of Agni that gives birth to lofty flames.

1. Here, o god, by his sacrifices the mortal (should summon) the mightier one for help;
   Pūru should summon Agni to give help, when a good rite has been performed.
2. Since, by reason of the mouth of this one [=both Agni and the poet], o distributor [=sacrificer], you think yourself to have greater glory for yourself,
   (you should summon) him, the vault of heaven with his shimmering blaze, the delighting one beyond inspired thinking.
3. Surely it is by the mouth and flame of this one, who is hitched up by thrust and song,
   by whose semen, like that of heaven, flames blaze aloft,
4. And it is by the will of this one—discerning, wondrous—that there are good things here on the chariot [=the sacrifice].
   So then Agni is proclaimed as the one to be invoked among all the clans.
5. Since the desirable reward is now just ours, our patrons follow after the mouth (of Agni and the poet).
   O child of nourishment, protect us that we prevail. Be capable that we have well-being.
   – And be present to strengthen us in battles.

V.18 (372) Agni

Mr̥ktavāhas Dvita Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This hymn is a dānastuti, a praise of generous patrons. Renou calls it a dānastuti for the whole preceding sequence of hymns. Dvita, who calls himself, perhaps jokingly, *mr̥ktávāhas* "him of the broken vehicle," summons Agni to reward Dvita's patrons. Agni should give them fame, although this fame is also partly and directly created by the hymn itself. They deserve this reward because they have generously given Dvita a gift of many horses (vss. 3, 5). The hymn praises Dvita as well, if indirectly, when it mentions the "brilliant insight" of the singer (vs. 4), which because of him exists among the patrons.

1. Early in the morning much beloved Agni, guest of the clan, should be praised,
   the immortal who rejoices at all the oblations among mortals.
2. Your own skill is at the ready for Dvita of the broken vehicle.
   He receives the (soma-)drop in proper sequence even as your praise singer, o immortal one.
3. For you do I summon him of long-lived blaze with a song for (you) generous ones,
   whose chariot speeds away undamaged, o giver of horses,
4. Or among whom is brilliant insight, who protect the recitations in (the singer's) mouth.
   The ritual grass has been strewn near him [=Agni] of sun-like majesty, and they have wrapped themselves in fame.
5. For those who have given me fifty horses for our joint praise,
   for the generous men, o Agni, make bright and great fame, lofty (fame) filled with men, o immortal one.

V.19 (373) Agni

Vavri Ātreya
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–2, anuṣṭubh 3–4, virāḍrūpā 5

As other translators have remarked, this hymn is enigmatic. Renou even describes it as a collection of disjointed verses, and it is true that in its five verses the hymn has three different meters.

The first two verses describe the birth of Agni in terms that suggest human birth. The fire is born from a womb of wood, its first covering, and appears with a caul of smoke, its second covering. Having emerged, it peeps out from the hollow of the lower churning stick that gave it birth. Then priests nurture Agni's growth into manhood, and perhaps Agni himself, as Geldner suggests, becomes a fortress for them, or perhaps the sacrificial ground governed by Agni is their fortress.

In verse 3 it is not clear who Śvaitreya might be. He could be Agni himself, whose kin would be his flames. Or he might be a clan leader or even, as Geldner argues, a racing bull. Because the relationship between Bṛhaduktha and Śvaitreya is unclear, it is equally uncertain how to understand the relationship between 3ab and cd. Bṛhaduktha is elsewhere a poet, and although the Anukramaṇī abstracts Vavri Ātreya as the name of the poet of this hymn from the *vavrí* "covering" in the first verse, it is more likely that Bṛhaduktha is actually the poet. He is apparently seeking the prize the way a horse does. Oldenberg points out that in the Vājapeya sacrifice there is a mantra that invites the horse to drink honey, perhaps to give him strength, and perhaps this custom lies behind the simile in d. The mystery deepens in verse 4, but it appears that Agni, when he is born, then mates with the two fire-churning

sticks that give him birth as he consumes them. The act would seem to be unholy, but that is merely Agni's deception.

The last verse apparently describes the fully mature Agni, flinging his flames in the wind. On this verse, see Hoffmann (1954/61: 46–47 [=1975: 375–76]); he is surely correct to read *sandhr̥ṣájas*, which could mean "daring warriors" or the like, instead of *san dhr̥ṣájas* with the Padapāṭha.

1. His low appearances [=low flames] are born forth. From the covering (of wood) a covering (of smoke) has become visible.
   He gazes out in the lap of his mother [=the lower churning stick].
2. Attentive, they [=the priests] have poured various offerings. Unblinkingly, they protect his manly power.
   They have entered into the firm fortress.
3. The kin of Śvaitreya have grown strong brilliantly, as have their peoples.
   With ornamented neck, Br̥haduktha (is) seeking the prize with this (honey) [=soma?], like (a prize-seeking horse) with honey.
4. (His semen) dear like the milk of desire, (his act) unkindred (incest) with two [=fire-churning sticks] that are kin,
   like the vessel of hot milk in whose belly is the prize, (he is) the undeceivable deceiver of every one.
5. Playing, o ray of light, you are here for us, ever finding yourself in alliance with the biting Wind.
   Hurl those well-sharpened flames, like daring warriors their sharp (weapons), o you who stand in the belly [=fire pit].

V.20 (374) Agni

Prayasvanta Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh

As in the previous hymn and the three that follow, the name of the poet has been extracted from the hymn itself, in this case from *práyasvant* "bringing pleasing offerings" in verse 3. The dominant theme is the songs, which are explicitly mentioned in every verse except verse 2, and even there they are probably the understood object in ab. Verse 2 is the most interesting in the hymn because it is not clear to whom the poet refers. It sounds as though the people he criticizes are rival poets, who have prospered through Agni, but who are in some way not acting or not performing the ritual properly now.

1. The wealth that even you hold in regard, o Agni, best winner of victory's prize,
   that yokemate of ours I will extol with songs as worthy of fame among the gods.

2. O Agni, those grown strong by your mighty power who do not send (songs)
   (to keep) away hatred, away crookedness, follow (the commandments) of one who is under the commandments of others.
3. We choose you, o Agni, as our Hotar, ensuring success for our skill.
   Bringing pleasing offerings, we summon with our song the one who is first in the sacrifices.
4. As (we strive) in this way for your help day after day, o powerful one,
   for wealth and for truth, o you of strong will, we your feasting companions would be united with cattle and we would be united with heroes.

V.21 (375) Agni

Sasa Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

The name of the poet is extracted from *sasá* "grain" in verse 4, which sticks out as an unusual word in an unusual context. The poet, whatever his name might be, pairs and links similar-sounding words and expressions. The last line of the first verse *devā́n devayaté yaja* (1d) is echoed in the first line of the last verse *devám̐ vo devayajyáyā* (4a). He fronts accented forms of the 2nd-person pronoun at the beginning of 2a (*tvám*) and 3a (*tvā́m*), both to be read disyllabically, as is normal for *tvám* but not for *tvā́m*. These repetitions are thematically the more significant since the poet emphasizes the 2nd-person address to Agni and his role as a god (vss. 3, 4) sacrificing to the gods. But there are other repetitions as well. For example verse 3 links *su-* and *uṣ-*sounds: *mā́n**uṣ**e*... ***sú**prīta*... *sr**ú**cas*... *ān**uṣ**ák* ***sú**jāta sárpirā**su**te*.

1. Like Manu, we would install you. Like Manu, we would kindle you.
   O Agni, Aṅgiras—like Manu, sacrifice to the gods for the one seeking the gods,
2. For, o Agni, it is you who, well-pleased, are kindled among the people descended from Manu.
   The sacrificial ladles go to you in their proper order, o you, the well-born one whose drink is melted butter.
3. It is you whom all the gods, as one, have made their messenger.
   Waiting upon you, o poet, they invoke you, a god, in the sacrifices.
4. The mortal should invoke for all of you the god Agni with sacrifice to the gods.
   O blazing one, shine when you are kindled. Take your seat upon the womb of truth. Take your seat upon the womb of grain.

V.22 (376) Agni

Viśvasāman Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

In verse 1 the poet Viśvasāman likely addresses himself. In doing so, he may be playing on the significance of his name, which means "he to whom belongs every tune," for he calls on himself to chant to Agni. The fire is installed as the Hotar of the rite, and like a Hotar he should be attentive. Therefore Viśvasāman asks that Agni be attentive to his praise and to his words. The references to Agni as the "Hotar within the clan" (vs. 1) and to the Atris (vs. 4) suggest that this short hymn was an address to the clan fire of the Atris, and of course the fire of a clan of poets ought to be especially attentive to the speech of poets and especially adorned by songs.

1. O Viśvasāman, like Atri chant forth to him of purifying flame,
   who is to be invoked at the rites as the most delighting Hotar within the clan.
2. Install Agni Jātavedas, the god and priest.
   Let the sacrifice go forth in proper sequence today as that which best encompasses the gods.
3. We mortals have brought to mind you of attentive mind, you a god, for help,
   begging for the help of you, the desirable one.
4. O Agni, be attentive to this (speech) of ours—here is our speech, o strong one!
   The Atris make you strong with their praise songs, o you of fair lips, o lord of the household; the Atris beautify you with song.

V.23 (377) Agni

Dyumna Viśvacarṣaṇi Ātreya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 4

This hymn invokes the fire that grants wealth, especially a wealth of cattle (vs. 2), which brings with it dominance over surrounding lands. At the same time the ability of Agni to grant wealth and power also depends on the sacrificers who bring the ritual grass (3a), who establish Agni as their Hotar (3c), and whose words confer power on him (1d). The references to the tribes who pursue Agni (vs. 3) and to Agni himself as the one "who belongs to all lands" (vs. 4) suggest that the fire of this hymn either was or was at least compared to the common fire that united the various Ārya peoples.

1. O Agni, bring here wealth that is overpowering through the power of your brilliance
   and that, with prizes at stake, will be powerful over the lands by means of my mouth [=my speech].

2. O powerful Agni, bring here that wealth overpowering in battles,
for you are the real and infallible giver of the prize that brings cattle.
3. For, with their ritual grass twisted, all the tribes as one
pursue you as their cherished Hotar in your seats [=fire places] for the sake of many desirable things.
4. For as always, that one who belongs to all lands acquires power against evil intents.
O Agni, here in these dwellings shine richly for us, o blazing one, shine brilliantly, o pure one.

V.24 (378) Agni

The Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas: Bandhu (1), Subandhu (2) Śrutabandhu (3), and Viprabandhu (4)
4 verses: dvipadā virāj

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn's four verses to four poets, all belonging to the family of the Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas. These four poets are brothers in the Gaupāyana family according to an itihāsa (legend) that is supposed to underlie X.57–60, although it is unlikely that these R̥gvedic hymns actually refer to this story. According to the story the second brother, Subandhu, was killed and brought back to life by the other three. In this hymn, the first and third verses are for protection, while the second verse, the one attributed to Subandhu, is a more generic call for wealth. The last verse simply asks for Agni's favor without being clear what end his favor should serve. In a general way the hymn thus fits the story of the rescue of Subandhu, since the verses surrounding his verse concern the idea of rescue. But such echoes may explain the attribution of the hymn rather than the hymn itself.

1. O Agni, be our nearest and our kind rescuer, providing (us) a shield.
2. Agni is good and famed for goods. Arrive here and give the most brilliant wealth.
3. Be attentive to us, and hear our summons. Give us freedom from anyone who wishes evil.
4. O strongest-blazing, shining (Agni), we now beg you for your favor for (us, your) partners.

V.25 (379) Agni

The Vasūyava Ātreyas
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, arranged in tr̥cas

The attribution of this hymn to the Vasūyavas is likely based on verse 9, in which the poet calls himself and his people *vasūyávaḥ* "those seeking goods." As Oldenberg

(1897) notes, the hymn is divided into three tr̥cas. This organization would explain its position in the Ātreya Agni collection. A hymn of three tr̥cas can follow a hymn of four verses in the proper sequence in which hymns with a fewer number of either verses or strophes follow hymns with a greater number of verses or strophes. However, Oldenberg (1888: 188) also suggests that V.25–28 may be an added supplement to the Agni collection.

In the first tr̥ca Agni is apparently first becoming present (vs. 2) and has begun to shine (vs. 3). Then in the second (vss. 4–6) the presence of Agni explodes, and the poet marks the force of Agni by constantly repeating his name at the beginning of every hemistich except one (5cd). In the final tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) the poet turns not so much to the sight of Agni as the sound of Agni. His louder and louder crackling is reflected in the words of the sacrifice and the other sounds of the sacrifice, notably the sounds of the pressing stones that pound the soma, which are themselves regularly connected to the chants and recitations of the rite. The danger of tr̥cas, especially when the strophes are as thematically distinct as they are in this hymn, is that the hymn itself may seem to break into blocks. This poet uses ring composition to unify the poem and to underscore its ultimate purpose. In 1d he says that Agni *parṣati dviṣáḥ* "will bring to safety from hatred," and again in 9cd, at the end of the hymn, that *sá no víśvā áti dvíṣaḥ / párṣat* "he will bring us to safety across all hatreds." While the two phrases obviously echo one another, note that the poet has not quite repeated himself. Most especially his first assertion seems to be a general one: Agni is the one who brings to safety. But in the last, Agni is the one who brings *us* to safety, applying Agni's more general power to himself and his people.

1. Here for you all I sing to the god Agni for his help. He is the one good for us.
   The son of (dawn's) rays will give; the possessor of truth will bring to safety from hatred.
2. For he is really present—the one whom even the ancients kindled, whom even the gods—
   he the very Hotar of gladdening tongue, who brings radiant goods through his bright light.
3. By your best insight and most excellent favor toward us,
   o Agni, shine on us riches by reason of our well-plaited words, o you who are worthy to be chosen.

4. Agni is king among the gods and Agni among mortals when he enters (among them).
   Agni is the conveyor of oblations for us. Serve Agni with your insights.
5. Agni gives to the pious man an excellent son of very mighty fame and of very mighty formulations,
   one who cannot be overcome and who brings fame to his lord.
6. Agni gives the lord of settlements who prevails in battle with his men;
   Agni (gives) the fast-running charger, the unvanquished victor.

7. What best conveys (offerings), that is for Agni. Chant (your chant) aloft,
   o you of far-radiant goods.
   Like a buffalo-cow wealth (arises) from you; victory's prizes arise
   from you.
8. Your flames are brilliant: (they resound) as the pressing stone
   resounds aloft,
   and just like thunder from heaven your roar has arisen by itself.
9. Thus, seeking goods, we have celebrated Agni who acts with strength.
   He of strong resolve will bring us to safety across all hatreds, as if by
   a boat.

V.26 (230) Agni

The Vasūyava Ātreyas
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Like the preceding hymn, this hymn comprises three tr̥cas. It draws on repeated pādas, especially although not exclusively in the final pādas of verses: 1c = VI.16.2c and VIII.102.16c; 2c = VII.16.4b; 4c = V.20.3a, VIII.60.1b, and X.21.1b; 5c = I.12.4c and VIII.44.14c; 7c = V.22.2b; and 9c = I.39.5d. Geldner provides a complete list of the repetitions. As such, it is reminiscent of the assemblages that constitute the kindling verses in several priestly families (see V.28 below). The first two tr̥cas (vss. 1–3, 4–6) are a direct address to Agni to assume his role as the one who conveys oblations to the gods and perfects the ritual. In the third tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) the poet turns to his fellow priests, telling them to install the fire, prepare the seat for the gods, and perform the rites in order, and then in the final verse, with the fire now blazing and the priests performing their roles, he invites various gods, perhaps representing the All Gods, to take their seats.

1. O purifying Agni, with your radiance and with your gladdening
   tongue, o god,
   convey the gods hither and sacrifice.
2. O you with ghee-covered back, o you of shimmering radiance, we beg
   you of sunlike appearance:
   convey the gods hither to pursue (our oblations).
3. O poet, we would kindle you, the brilliant one whose oblations are worth
   pursuing,
   the lofty one in the rite, o Agni.

4. O Agni, come with all the gods for the giving of oblations.
   We choose you as our Hotar.
5. Convey an abundance of heroes to the sacrificer pressing soma, o Agni!
   Sit here on our ritual grass along with the gods!

6. Being kindled, o thousand-conquering Agni, you prosper the (ritual) foundations
   as the praiseworthy messenger of the gods.

7. Install Agni Jātavedas, who conveys the oblations, the youngest (Agni),
   as god and priest.
8. Let the sacrifice go forth in proper sequence today as that which best encompasses the gods.
   Strew the sacred grass (for the gods) to sit.
9. Let the Maruts, the Aśvins, and Mitra and Varuṇa sit here upon this,
   let the gods with their whole clan.

V.27 (381) Agni

Kings Tryaruṇa Traivr̥ṣṇa, Trasadasyu Paurukutsya, and Aśvamedha Bhārata, or Atri Bhauma
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn consists of two tr̥cas, so it is in its proper place according to its length. Nonetheless, Oldenberg (*Noten* and 1897) regards it as an addition to the original collection.

The hymn is a dānastuti addressed to allied patrons or kings. The Anukramaṇī names three patrons, but, as Oldenberg (1897) and Geldner suggest, Tryaruṇa might be a descendant of Trasadasyu and bear his name as an epithet (vs. 3). If so, then the hymn addresses two men, Tryaruṇa (vss. 1–3 in triṣṭubh) and Aśvamedha (vss. 4–6 in anuṣṭubh). In verse 4 Tryaruṇa commands Aśvamedha to reward the poet, but it remains unclear just how the two are related.

The translation and interpretation of the hymn become difficult especially at verse 3, which is open to a number of different constructions. We understand 3ab to mean that the sacrificer desires Agni's favor for the poet's hymn. Why he should desire this favor *navamám* "for the ninth time" is not stated, but there is a parallel in VIII.24.23, which calls on the poet to praise *daśamám* "a tenth time." In both verses the numbers may simply indicate "many times." Here in this hymn, however, it is likely that *navamám*, especially because it follows *náviṣṭhāya* "for the newest," either means "anew" rather than "ninth" or puns on the two meanings. The "harnessed chariot," with which Tryaruṇa welcomes the poet's song in 3cd, may be a gift to the poet, or it may be the sacrifice itself, which elsewhere is represented as a chariot.

Verse 4 begins the second tr̥ca, a transition that is marked also by a change in meter. But in contrast to the clear segmentation of the hymn shown by the tr̥ca form and the meter, the syntax binds verse 4 with verse 3, since the opening relative clause is coordinate with the relative clause in 3cd. This may reproduce the relationship between Tryaruṇa and Aśvamedha, who are two individuals but who are in some manner bound to one another.

1. The lord of settlements has readied for me two oxen together with an ox-cart—he, the most illustrious lord, more (illustrious) than (any other) generous patron.
   Tryaruṇa, son of Trivr̥ṣan, is illustrious through his tens of thousands (of cattle), o Agni Vaiśvānara.
2. To him who gives to me a hundred and twenty cattle and two harnessed fallow bays, compliant to the chariot-pole—
   to Tryaruṇa offer protection, o Agni Vaiśvānara, o you who are well praised and grown strong.
3. In this way, o Agni, Trasadasyu [=Tryaruṇa] is desiring your favor for the newest (hymn) for the ninth time—
   Tryaruṇa, who welcomes with a harnessed (chariot) the many songs of mine for (you), the one powerfully born;
4. (Tryaruṇa), who will declare thus to my patron Aśvamedha:
   "Let him [=Aśvamedha] give to (the poet) questing for gain by his verse; let him give to the one who seeks the truth, (questing for) wisdom."
5. (Such are) the gifts of Aśvamedha, whose hundred gray bulls
   excite me like soma juices with their three additions [=milk, curds, barley].
6. O Indra and Agni, keep an abundance of heroes with Aśvamedha, the giver of a hundred (cattle),
   and (keep with him) dominion, lofty and unaging like the sun in heaven.

V.28 (382) Agni

Viśvavārā Ātreyī
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1, 3, jagatī 2, anuṣṭubh 4, gāyatrī 5, 6, arranged in tr̥cas

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a female poet, but her name is extracted from *viśvávārā* "bringing all desirable things" in 1c, which describes the sacrificial ladle.

One of the striking features of this hymn is its use of four different meters in its six verses. As that metrical variation suggests, the hymn is not a unified composition but rather a collection of verses from the Atri tradition, brought together as sāmidhenī verses to accompany the kindling of fire. There are similar composite sāmidhenī hymns in the collections of the Viśvāmitras (III.27) and of the Bharadvājas (VI.16). As Proferes (2003: 10) notes, these hymns are three of the four hymns used by both the Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana traditions for the compilation of the sāmidhenī verses used in the classical Vedic rites.

Even though the hymn is a compilation, the tr̥ca form does reflect its structure. The first three verses urge Agni to show himself as he comes into flame. In 1cd the description sounds as though it might refer to the dawn (in 1b), but at the end the subject is revealed to be the ghee-filled ladle, or perhaps it is both the ghee-filled

ladle and the ghee-filled dawn that move forward, the first to the east, the second toward the west. The second tṛca (4–6) begins with a praise of the fire in full blaze and an invocation to him to take on the task of bringing the oblations to the gods.

1. Kindled, Agni has lifted his flame to heaven. Facing the dawn, he radiates widely.
   Forward she goes with our homage, bringing all desirable things, summoning the gods with the oblation—she, the ghee-filled (ladle).
2. When you are being kindled, you rule over what is immortal. For well-being you accompany him who prepares the oblation.
   He acquires all material wealth whom you urge onward, and he sets his hospitality in front, o Agni.
3. O Agni, show yourself off for the sake of great good fortune. Let your brilliance be very high.
   Let our united household be easy to control. Surmount the great powers of those who act as our rivals.

4. I extol the glory of you, kindled and greatly exalted, o Agni.
   You are the bull of brilliance. You are kindled in the rites.
5. When you are kindled, o Agni of poured offerings, sacrifice to the gods, o you of good rites,
   for you are the conveyor of oblations.
6. Pour an offering to Agni and seek his friendship as the rite goes forth.
   Choose him as the conveyor of oblations.

V.29 (383) Indra

Gaurivīti Śāktya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn consists primarily of a recital of Indra's great deeds, with special attention to the Vṛtra saga and the Maruts' role in it (vss. 1–4, 6–9). Interspersed are verses devoted to two much less understood myths, Indra's conflict with the Sun in an apparent chariot race (vss. 5, 9–10) and his journey with Kutsa to Uśanā's house and the defeat of Śuṣṇa (vs. 9), myths that often appear together and show narrative connections. There are as well brief mentions of other exploits of Indra, including the Vala myth (vs. 12). The story of the Sun's chariot and the Kutsa/Uśanā complex are particular preoccupations of the Indra hymns of Maṇḍala V, although the references to them (Sun's chariot V.31.11, Kutsa/Uśanā V.31.7–10) do not help to clarify the details as much as we would like.

The poet several times (vss. 1, 3, 7) mentions Manu, the first Ārya man and sacrificer, in connection with the mythic past. This emphasis on Manu, the theoretical ancestor of the current sacrificers, is presumably meant to associate those current

sacrificers with the participants and supporters of Indra in his previous deeds, in order to gain a portion of reflected glory. As often, the hymn sometimes narrates the myths as if in present time (see esp. vss. 1, 6, 12, all three using the same verb "they chant" [*árcanti*]). This again is a strategy serving the same purpose, here by specifically identifying the present singers with both the Maruts and the Aṅgirases.

The hymn is also structured by recurrent soma-drinking phrases, each slightly different, almost always in the second half of an even pāda (see 2b, 3b, 3d, 5b, 7d, 8b, 11d), a pattern that provides a sort of rhythmic theme-and-variations.

It ends with three verses (13–15) in which the poet refers globally to the amazing range of Indra's deeds past and future, and in the final verse offers him his own well-crafted poems. Only one word in this verse, *vasūyúḥ* "seeking goods," out of the whole hymn, hints that the poet would like something in return.

1. They uphold the three customs [=rituals of the soma-pressing day] at
 Manu's attendance on the gods and the three heavenly realms of light.
 The Maruts of refined skill chant to you. You are their wise seer, Indra.
2. When the Maruts chanted to him after he became exhilarated, to Indra
 who had drunk of the pressed soma,
 he took up the mace. When he (had) smashed the serpent, he released the
 exuberant waters to flow.
3. And—you formulators, you Maruts—Indra should drink of this
 well-pressed soma of mine,
 for this is his oblation: he found the cows for Manu; Indra smashed the
 serpent, having drunk of it.
4. After that he propped the two world-halves wide apart; even while
 enwrapped, he set the wild beast to fearing.
 Repeatedly taunting the gulper, Indra smashed the snorting Dānava back
 and down.
5. Then according to your will, o bounteous one, all the gods conceded the
 soma-drinking to you,
 when you put the flying golden mares of the Sun behind, though they
 were in front, in (the presence of) Etaśa.
6. When the bounteous one hews apart his [=Vr̥tra's] nine and ninety coils
 at one blow with his mace,
 the Maruts chant to Indra at the seat (of conflict). With speech in
 triṣṭubh meter he thrusts heaven (away from earth).
7. As a comrade for a comrade, Agni straightaway cooked three hundred
 buffalo in accord with his [=Indra's] will.
 Indra drank the pressed soma of Manu, three lakes worth at one blow,
 for the Vr̥tra-smashing.
8. When you the bounteous devoured the flesh of three hundred buffaloes
 and drank three somian lakes,
 all the gods called "Carry (the day)!" to Indra as (a gambler calls)
 "Game!," when he smashed the serpent.

9. When, Indra, (you and Kutsa) drove to the home of Uśanā with the mighty, speeding horses,
as combatant you drove there on the same chariot with Kutsa, with the gods. You combated Śuṣṇa.
10. You tore off the one wheel of the Sun for Kutsa; the other you made into wide space for driving.
You crushed the Dasyus mouthless with your murderous weapon; you wrenched those of slighting speech down into a woeful womb.
11. The praises of Gaurivīti strengthened you. You made Pipru subject to Vaidathina.
R̥jiśvan brought you here for companionship, cooking cooked foods (for you). You drank his soma.
12. The Navagvas, the Daśagvas [=Aṅgirases], having pressed soma, chant to Indra with chants.
Just that cowpen with its covering [=Vala cave]—just that have the men, having ritually labored, opened up.
13. How shall I, (though) knowing them, now encompass your heroic deeds that you have done, o bounteous one,
and the new ones that you will do, strongest one? We will proclaim these (deeds) of yours at the ceremonies.
14. Having done all these many (deeds), Indra, by your nature you cannot be circumscribed in heroism.
As for those (deeds) you will do even now in your daring, possessor of the mace—there exists no one to obstruct this power of yours.
15. O Indra, enjoy the sacred formulations being made, the new ones we have made for you, strongest one.
Like garments, lovely and well made, like a chariot have I fashioned them—I the clever artisan, seeking goods.

V.30 (384) Indra

Babhru Ātreya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn follows a fairly straightforward chronological trajectory. The poet begins by wondering where Indra is (vs. 1), locates him on the way to the sacrifice (vs. 2), and promises the god to recite his deeds at the ceremony (vs. 3). This recital occupies the middle of the hymn (vss. 4–10), ending (vs. 11) with a return to the ritual setting, where Indra, pleased by the soma, bestows cows. This mythic model provides a smooth transition to the last four verses (12–15), the poet's dānastuti, praising his patrons the Ruśamas and their king, R̥ṇaṃcaya (lit., "he who requites his debts"), for their gift to him of four thousand cows, plus a piece of ritual equipment, a pot. The poet names himself in verse 14.

The recital of Indra's deeds touches on the Vala myth (vs. 4), the Vr̥tra myth (vss. 5–6), and the defeat of Namuci (vss. 7–8). The intriguing mention of the Dāsa "who made women his weapons" (vs. 9) is unfortunately more opaque; however, it may be connected with an equally opaque verse, I.104.3. In our view both passages refer to rivers controlled by the Ārya's consistent, and perhaps indigenous, opponents, thus serving as a barrier to Ārya progress. The words "river" and "stream" (*dhénā*) are feminine in gender, and so these are the female "weapons" of 9a. Once Indra has recognized that the "weapons" are mere (female) streams, he leads the charge against the Dāsa foe. The cows captured in this raid may be referred to in verse 10, the same cows that Indra distributes in verse 11.

1. Where is this hero? Who has seen Indra of the well-naved chariot
   speeding with his two fallow bays,
   the mace-bearer, who, seeking one who has pressed the soma, will come
   to that home, when he is much invoked, with wealth, with help?
2. I spotted his track in secret; I followed the powerful track of the one who
   laid it down, seeking him.
   I asked the others, and they said to me, "We men might attain Indra,
   since we have wakened (early)."
3. We shall now proclaim at the pressing the deeds that are yours, Indra,
   which you will enjoy (hearing) from us.
   He will learn who does not know, and he will hear who does know: "This
   bounteous one is traveling here fully armed."
4. You made your mind steadfast when you were just born, Indra; even
   alone you pursue the many for battle.
   You made even a stone flash like lightning through your vast power; you
   found the pen of the ruddy cows.
5. When you were born far away in the farthest (realm), bearing a name
   famous afar,
   from then on even the gods feared Indra. He conquered all the waters,
   those whose husband [=Vr̥tra] was a Dāsa.
6. Just for you do these friendly Maruts chant the chant, press the stalk.
   The serpent vaunting himself, lying on the waters—Indra will overcome
   the tricky one with tricks.
7. You hewed apart those negligent by nature, stimulating giving, o
   bounteous one, taking pleasure along with the cow,
   at the time when you caused the head of the Dāsa Namuci to roll,
   seeking an (open) way for Manu—
8. For you have made me your yokemate, Indra—just afterward stealing the
   head of the Dāsa Namuci,
   which was rolling, (like?) a whizzing stone, like the two world-halves
   (that roll) forth like two wheels, for the Maruts.
9. Because the Dāsa made women his weapons, what can they do to me?
   His armies lack strength.

Since he [=Indra] distinguished both his [=the Dāsa's?] streams,
therefore Indra advanced on the Dasyu to fight.

10. Together the cows then lowed on every side, since they were here, there, and everywhere separated from their calves.
Along with his powerful (men) Indra drove them together, when the well-pressed soma drinks exhilarated him.
11. When the soma drinks rinsed by Babhru exhilarated him, the bull set up a bellowing among the (ritual) seats.
The stronghold-splitting Indra, having drunk of it, gave again of the ruddy cows.
12. The Ruśamas have done this auspicious thing, o Agni, in giving four thousand cows.
The proffered bounties of Ṛṇaṃcaya, most manly of men, we have accepted.
13. The Ruśamas send me home well-ornamented with thousands of cows, o Agni.
The sharp (soma-drinks, when) pressed, exhilarated Indra at the early brightening of the night, at its final turn.
14. (When) that night brightened at its final turn, at (the hands of) Ṛṇaṃcaya, king of the Ruśamas,
like a steed quick in competition, being driven [/anointed], Babhru won four thousand (cows).
15. Four thousand bovine livestock have we accepted from the Ruśamas.
Also the gharma pot, which was heated for the Pravargya rite, the one made of copper, that too have we inspired poets taken.

V.31 (385) Indra

Avasyu Ātreya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous Indra hymns in this maṇḍala, this hymn provides a survey of Indra's great deeds, with the ritual context for this recital made explicit in verses 5–6 and Indra's journey to the sacrifice sketched in verses 1–2. The recital itself is fragmentary and mosaic-like, with glittering vignettes from various myths juxtaposed unordered. This fragmented nature is enhanced by abrupt switches between the past and the present/future (see, e.g., vss. 6, 11). The stories of the chariot of the Sun (vs. 11) and of Kutsa and Uśanā (vss. 7–10) encountered in V.29 recur here, vivid but enigmatic. The ritual context returns in the final two verses, with Indra's arrival at the sacrifice (12) and prayers for Indra's help (13).

1. Indra makes an easy slope for his chariot, the prize-seeking one, which the bounteous one has mounted.
   Like a herdsman separating the flocks of livestock, he keeps (his chariot) separate (from the others). Invulnerable, he drives as the first to seek winnings.
2. Run hither, you of the fallow bays; do not lose the track. You of tawny [=golden] gifts, accompany us,
   for there exists nothing better than you, Indra: you have provided even those lacking the brideprice with wives.
3. When he was born as might from might, Indra displayed all his Indrian powers.
   He impelled forth the good milkers (who were) within the cave; he pried apart the darkness, which was rolled up in a ball, with light.
4. The Anu people fashioned a chariot for your horse; Tvaṣṭar (fashioned) the brilliant mace, o much invoked one.
   The formulators, magnifying Indra with their chants, strengthened him to smash the serpent.
5. When for you the bull, o Indra, the bulls and the pressing stones will chant a chant, with Aditi in concord—
   the (pressing stones like) wheel-rims which, (even) without horses, without chariots, but impelled by Indra, rolled over the Dasyus—
6. I will proclaim your previous deeds, proclaim the current ones that you have done, bounteous one,
   when, potent one, you will pull apart both world-halves, winning the waters, bright in drops, for Manu.
7. Just this now is your deed, wondrous poet: that smashing the serpent, you measured out your strength there.
   Even Śuṣṇa's magic arts you enveloped; on your way to the ritual meal you repelled the Dasyus.
8. You brought the waters, the good milkers, to rest for Yadu and Turvaśa, (when you were their) transport, Indra.
   You two drove to the strong one [=Uśanā]—that is, you conveyed Kutsa—when the gods encountered you two along with Uśanā.
9. [Uśanā:] "O Indra and Kutsa, let the steeds convey you two, traveling by chariot, right here close to our face [/lit. ear].
   You two blow him [=Śuṣṇa?] out of the water, out of his seat; (by doing this) you two will keep the dark shadows away from the heart of the bounteous one."
10. It was just this sage poet [=Indra?] who had gone, seeking help, to the yoked horses of the Wind, so easy to yoke.
    All the Maruts were your partners then, Indra; their sacred formulations strengthened your power.

11. The very chariot of the Sun, (which is) in front, at the decisive turning he will put behind, (though) it is speeding.
    Etaśa [=the Sun's horse] bore the wheel; he restores it. Putting (the chariot?) in front (again?), he will gain our intention.
12. This Indra has come here to look about, o peoples, seeking a partner who has pressed the soma.
    The pressing stone, speaking, will be carried down to the altar—the stone whose nimble (action) the Adhvaryus attend to.
13. Those who take pleasure [/are dear (to you)], they shall take pleasure now [/shall be dear]. The mortals, o immortal one—let them not encounter constraint.
    Cherish the worshipful ones and place strength among these your peoples, among whom may we be.

V.32 (386) Indra

Gātu Ātreya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

In contrast to the bricolage of the previous hymn, this hymn concentrates on a single myth, the Vr̥tra battle, occupying verses 1–8 and providing one of the most sustained accounts of this story outside of I.32. But this poet avoids using the standard formulae associated with that narrative, instead ringing changes on the normal phraseology (especially the *áhann áhim* formula: "you/he smashed the serpent," which does not appear as such in this hymn). Considerable attention is paid to Indra's opponent, but interestingly the word *vr̥trá* is never used. Instead he is identified several times as Dānava (descendant of Dānu, who is called Vr̥tra's mother in I.32.9, or a member of the demonic Dānu tribe) and once called *śúṣṇa*, usually the name of a different foe of Indra (see, e.g., nearby V.29.9), but here probably used in its etymological sense, "hisser." But mostly he is nameless, a state emphasized by the emphatic, repeated, verse-initial forms of *t(i)yá- cid* "that very one" (vss. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8), a sort of empty and open-ended deictic that attracts a series of shifting descriptors of horror. The emphasis on darkness (vss. 4, 5, 6), fog (vs. 4), and emptiness (vs. 7) also suggests an indistinct enemy that lacks proper definition.

After this depiction of Indra's great victory over the multifarious monster, it comes as no surprise that in the next verses (9–11) Indra's power is universally acknowledged by cosmic forces and mortals alike. Verse 9 opens with the question "who can obstruct him?"—using the verb *varāte*, belonging to the same root and having the same semantics as the suppressed name Vr̥tra "obstruction." The question thus carries with it an implied conditional—"who can obstruct him if Obstruction itself cannot?"—with the implicit answer obviously "no one." The last verse turns, as often, to the benefits Indra can bestow on the poet, ending with a

perhaps teasing rhetorical question, paraphrasable as: "Do (other) poets complain about your gifts?"

1. You violently split the wellspring; you reamed out its apertures. You brought to peace the floods, which had been hard pressed.
   When, Indra, you pried apart the great mountain, you set loose the streams; you smashed down the Dānava.
2. You, o mace-bearer, sent speeding the wellsprings that had been hard pressed through the seasons (in?) the udder of the mountain.
   Having smashed the very serpent lying spread out for some distance, strong Indra, you assumed your power.
3. With his powers Indra smashed away the weapon of that very one, the great wild beast,
   who was thinking himself unopposable even on his own. But then there was born one more powerful than he.
4. That very one—drunk on his own power, belonging to them [=the Dānavas], child of the fog, grown very strong, emerging from darkness,
   the Wrath of the Dānavas—(it was) the hisser [/Śuṣṇa] that the mace-bearer smashed down with his mace, he who receives the proffered bullish (soma) offering.
5. That very one (he smashed down), (so he became) sunk down in accord with his [=Indra's] intentions. He found just that vulnerable place of him (who thought himself) invulnerable,
   when at the proffering of the invigorating (soma) you consigned him who sought battle to darkness, (as if) to a secure house, o you of good dominion.
6. That very one, lying just so, horribly swollen, having grown strong in the sunless darkness,
   just him did the bull Indra, invigorated on the pressed (soma), smash from above, after taunting him.
7. When Indra held up to the great Dānava his weapon, which was unopposable might itself,
   when at the proffering of the mace he outwitted him, he made him the lowest of all creation.
8. The strong one [=Indra] mightily took that very one—the honey-drinker lying on the flood, the insatiable cavity,
   the footless devourer with slighting speech; with a great murderous weapon he wrenched him down into a woeful womb.
9. Who can obstruct his tempestuousness, his power? Alone, unopposable, he bears away riches.
   Even these two goddesses [=the two world-halves] now bend (away) from fear of his expansion, of Indra's strength.

10. The heavenly hatchet [/the goddess Autonomous Power] bends down to him; to Indra a way [/Gātu = poet's name] yields itself, like an eager (wife).
    When he joins his whole strength with them, the settled peoples incline themselves to the one of autonomous power.
11. I hear of you as born the sole master of settlements, belonging to the five peoples, glorious among the peoples,
    (while) my hopes have grabbed (always) for the newest Indra, calling on him (every) evening and dawn.
12. For thus I hear of you as arranging the bounties in the proper season and as giving them to inspired poets.
    Do the formulators, your comrades, complain, who have deposited their desire with you, Indra?

V.33 (387) Indra

Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The structure of this hymn is relatively straightforward. It begins (vs. 1) with the poet's praise of Indra, presented as an inducement to the god to come to his sacrifice, followed (vss. 2–3) by the usual tropes of a "journey" hymn, including the yoking of Indra's horses. The poet recognizes that there are competing sacrifices (vs. 4a), but continues to urge Indra to choose to come to his (vs. 5). There follow two verses (6–7) asking for gifts from Indra. The hymn ends with a three-verse dānastuti (8–10), praising the gift of horses from a number of different patrons.

1. I conjure up a great (praise) for the great, powerful one among superior men, for Indra so very powerful—I who am not so powerful—
   he who, praised among the people as battle-ready, takes note of the good thought (directed) toward him at the prize-winning.
2. You, Indra, being conjured up by our chants, have fixed the yoking thong for the fallow bays, you bull.
   You will drive here just so, following your pleasure, bounteous one. You will bring (good things); you will be victorious over the peoples of the stranger.
3. These (horses) of yours (will) not (remain) unyoked because of us [i.e., because of our failure], lofty Indra, if it's for lack of a (yoking) formulation.
   Mount on the chariot with mace in hand. You with the good horses will hold your own rein, o god.

4. Just as there are many hymns that exist for you, Indra, and many are (the deeds) you have done for the cow, when fighting over the meadows,
   (and many [the paths]?) you carved out also for the sun in your [/his] own home, as bull you (have carved out) even the names of the Dāsa in the contests.
5. We are yours, Indra—as are the superior men born as a troop [=Maruts?] and the driving-chariots.
   As a consummate warrior he [=Indra] should come here to us, o you with the serpent's hiss—dear, like Bhaga to be invoked at our forays [/dear like a portion to be offered at our (ritual) presentations].
6. For, Indra, in you are strength to be nurtured and manly powers. As prancing immortal,
   give us dappled wealth, you winner of goods. I will start up the praise for the gift of the powerfully bounteous stranger.
7. So, help us, Indra, with your help. Protect the singers, the bards, o champion.
   And please those giving the skin of the dear, well-pressed honey at the winning of prizes.
8. And these gold-bedecked (horses) of my patron, Paurukutsya Trasadasyu, when they are given—
   let his ten white ones convey me. I am attended by the intentions of Gairikṣita.
9. And (let) these (convey me)—the ruddy (horses) of Mārutāśva, the bounty of his intentions at the giving of the distribution,
   (when) Cyavatāna was giving a thousand of his own to me. Afterward (the singer) sang as if to marvel (at the gift) of the stranger [=Indra].
10. And (let) these (convey me)—the enjoyable (horses) of Dhvanya Lakṣmaṇya, the very bright ones having being marshaled.
    Through the greatness of his wealth the proffered (horses) have come, like cows to the cowpen, (to the enclosure) of the seer Saṃvaraṇa.

V.34 (388) Indra

Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The first three verses of this hymn urge sacrificers to make offerings to Indra and promise them a return on this investment of ritual energy, and the preoccupation throughout most of the hymn is the contrast between the generous and the stingy and their respective fates (see esp. vss. 5–7). There is a hostile and dangerous edge to

much of the rhetoric: the punishments Indra metes out to non-givers are described with gusto.

But the most curious feature of the hymn is verse 4, where Indra, depicted as the killer of the father, mother, and brother of an apparently blameless man, not only feels no remorse ("he does not shrink from his offense"), but expects to receive offerings from his victim. The word "offense" used here is a rare and charged one (*kílbiṣa*): the uncompounded form is found only here in the R̥gveda, and the four other (compounded) occurrences of it are in late hymns in Maṇḍala X. Our passage here seems a foreshadowing of a theme in Indra mythology that becomes highly developed in the middle Vedic period, that of Indra's offenses or misdeeds, catalogued as a set of *kilbiṣāṇi* (see Jamison 1991: 64–68), with Indra as the figure of a warrior run amuck. But the theme seems out of place in the context here, save perhaps for Indra's excessively aggressive behavior toward the stingy in other verses. (The stingy deserve this treatment, however, in the ritual calculus of the R̥gveda; the man violently deprived of his kin does not.)

The hymn ends with what appears to be a truncated dānastuti (vs. 9): the poet praises his apparent patron Āgniveśi Śatri, but no gifts are mentioned.

1. Autonomous power, unaging, solar, immeasurable, speeds after him, the wondrous, whose rival has not been born.
   Press, cook for the one whose vehicle is the sacred formulation; set more (offerings) out for the one praised by many.
2. He who filled his belly with soma, the bounteous one, drew exhilaration from the honey, the stalk,
   when Uśanā, possessing the great weapon, held the thousand-spiked weapon (out to him), to smash the wild beast.
3. Whoever presses soma for him in the heat or whoever in the cold, he certainly becomes heaven-bright.
   The able one, the bounteous one who is partner to the poet (/Kavi [Uśanā]), snatches off the extended (garment), resplendent on his body.
4. The man whose father the able one has smashed, whose mother, whose brother—he [=Indra] does not shrink (even) from him.
   Rather, he actually pursues his offerings; the arranger, the distributor of goods does not shrink from his offense.
5. He does not wish to grasp (the offerings) (only) by fives or tens. He does not keep company with a man who doesn't press (soma), even a prosperous one.
   He either despoils (him as he goes) along the way, or the tumultuous one smashes (him). But he gives to the god-seeker a share in the pen full of cattle.
6. Very energetic in the clash, affixing the wheel (to the chariot?), he is antagonistic to the non-presser, but strengthener of the presser.

Indra is the dominator of all, spreading fear; the Ārya leads the Dāsa as he wishes.

7. He drives together the sustenance of the niggard, to steal it, but he shares out liberal goods to the pious.
   In a (place) of no exit there is held firmly each and every people that has antagonized his power.
8. When the two wealthy peoples with all their troops (clashed) together, Indra the bounteous pursued (them) in the (battles for) resplendent cattle.
   Since the shaker has made one of them his yokemate, he drives up for himself the bovine (wealth) (of the other)—the tumultuous one along with his warriors.
9. The thousand-winning Āgniveśi Śatri will I sing, the measure and the beacon for the stranger, o Agni.
   For him the waters will swell continuously; in him let there be lordly power aggressive and ardent.

V.35 (389) Indra

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 8

A simple hymn calling on Indra for help, the word that provides the outer skeleton of the hymn: forms of the root "help" (√*av*) as noun or verb are found in the first three verses and the last two (7–8). The interior verses (4–6) simply provide conventional praise of Indra's powers.

1. Your resolve to help that best brings success, Indra, bring that here—
   the resolve that conquers the territories for us, a winner difficult to surpass in the (contests for) prizes.
2. Whether you have four, Indra, or you have three, o champion,
   or five settlements (for you to help)—bring this same help to us now.
3. We summon hither the help worthy to be chosen, the help of you, the most bullish one,
   for you were born with the speed of a bull, Indra, victorious with your (forms of help) ready at hand.
4. For you are a bull; for benefit you were born; bullish is your power.
   Your daring mind has its own dominion; your masculine nature smites entirely.
5. You, Indra, possessor of the stone—run down the mortal who acts the foe,
   chariot and all, you lord of power who possess a hundred resolves.

6. Just you, best smasher of obstacles, do the peoples, when they have twisted their ritual grass,
   call on for the winning of prizes—you the strong, foremost among the many (peoples) [/in the many (battles)].
7. Our chariot, Indra—help it, the one difficult to surpass, driving in front in the contests,
   driving together (with you?) whenever the stakes (are set), seeking prizes.
8. Our chariot, Indra—come help it along with Plenitude.
   We would establish desirable fame for ourselves in heaven, strongest one;
   we will conceive a praise (poem) (to reach) to heaven.

V.36 (390) Indra

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 3

Like the preceding hymn, attributed to the same poet, this one keeps its focus on Indra, but is less predictable in its phraseology. The first four verses deploy a series of similes characterizing Indra, the soma, and the singer(s). Verse 5 plays heavily with the word "bull" (*vṛ́ṣan*) for Indra and his accoutrements, a device that returns more insistently in the first four verses of V.40. The final verse (6) is a short dānastuti to the patron Śrutaratha ("[Having a] Famous Chariot"), whose name may have inspired the wheel and chariot imagery of verse 3: the phrase "from the chariot" in that verse is somewhat puzzling on the surface, but if it slyly expresses the hope that the singer will become one "possessing many goods from (Famous) Chariot," it may be a prefiguring of the dānastuti.

1. He will come here—Indra, who will be attentive to the giving of the gift of goods and riches.
   Like a buffalo roaming the wasteplaces, thirsting, let him desirously drink the milked plant.
2. Soma mounts your jaws, your lips, you champion, possessor of the fallow bays, as the soma plant grows on the back of a mountain.
   Like one driving his steeds, we all would cheer you on with hymns, o much-invoked king.
3. Like a wheel set rolling my mind trembles with fear of neglect, o much-invoked possessor of the stone.
   Surely the singer will now praise you from the chariot, o ever-strengthening bounteous one—(so he will become) one possessing many goods?
4. This singer, like a pressing stone, raises his voice high to you, Indra, panting after (you).

With your left hand, bounteous possessor of the fallow bays, hold forth wealth, and hold it forth right-handed: do not lose track.

5. Let bullish heaven strengthen you, the bull; as bull you travel with your two bullish fallow bays.
   As bull with a bullish chariot, well-lipped one, as bull with bullish will, you of the mace, set us up in loot.
6. He who, possessing prizewinning mares, has allotted (to me) two prizewinning chestnuts accompanied by three hundred (cows?),
   to him, the youth, let the settled peoples together do homage, to Śrutaratha, o Maruts, in friendship.

V.37 (391) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Two verses devoted to the activities of the dawn sacrifice open the hymn; the last two verses (4–5) describe the successes of the king whose sacrifice Indra attends, with the king's actions assimilated to Indra's great deeds (Vala and Vr̥tra, both 4cd). The middle verse (3) is a sort of riddle and serves, therefore, as a mild omphalos: the bride in question may be Speech, as the beloved of Indra (as some have suggested), or perhaps Dawn. The husband may be Indra, or the Sun. (We favor the Dawn/Sun interpretation, which is in keeping with the dawn-ritual context.)

There are two pieces of onomastic verbal play that look outside the hymn proper. In verse 3c the phrase "his chariot will seek fame" (*śravasyād ráthaḥ*) recalls the name of the patron Śruta-ratha, whose praise ended the previous hymn (V.36.6). And the phrase "with the radiance of the sun" (*bhānúnā… sū́ryasya*) in the first pāda of the hymn (1a), describing Agni, is actually the solution to the story of Svar-bhānu ("[Having] the Sun's Radiance") told in V.40.5–9. It is especially appropriate to find this answer given at the beginning of this hymn here, as it is the first in a series of hymns attributed to Atri, among which is V.40.

1. He [=Agni] aligns himself with the radiance of the sun, being bepoured, with ghee on his back, of lovely outlook.
   The non-neglectful dawns will shine forth to him [=sacrificer] who says "Let us press (soma) for Indra."
2. With his fire kindled and his ritual grass spread, he will win; with his pressing stones yoked and his soma pressed, he will sing;
   whose pressing stones speak vigorously, he will go, as Adhvaryu, down to the river with an oblation.
3. Here she goes, a bride seeking a husband who will take her home as vigorous chief wife.

His chariot will seek fame here and will sound loudly here; it will roll itself for many thousand (leagues).

4. That king does not falter, by whom Indra drinks the sharp soma whose comrades are cows.
   He drives (the cows) here with his warriors, he smashes Vṛtra; he dwells peacefully, prospering the settled peoples, bearing the name "Well-portioned."
5. He will prosper in peace, and he will prevail at the hitching up (for war); (when) the two opponents are clashing together, he will entirely conquer;
   he will become dear to the Sun, dear to Agni—the one who with pressed soma will do ritual service to Indra.

V.38 (392) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

Geldner, the most authoritative twentieth-century translator of the Ṛgveda, pronounced this hymn empty of content ("inhaltslos"). This judgment does not seem entirely fair, but the hymn is characterized by a certain lack of syntactic coherence, as well as an overabundance of elaborate vocatives addressed to Indra. It is not clear who the second god is in verse 3, though he is possibly Varuṇa; otherwise the hymn only makes reference to Indra.

The hymn is in some ways a twin to the following one, sharing vocabulary and thematics, but the second hymn provides only limited help in interpreting this one.

1. Extensive is the giving of your broad largesse, o Indra of a hundred resolves.
   So make ready to give to us brilliant things, you of good lordship who govern all domains.
2. What praiseworthy thing you appropriate as your nourishment, strongest Indra,
   that spreads itself as having the longest fame, difficult to surpass, o you of golden hue—
3. (As do) your tempests, which serve your will in profusion, o possessor of the stone.
   Both you gods rule over both heaven and earth to dominate them.
4. And (you rule) over this skill of yours, whatever it may be, for us, o Vṛtra-smasher.
   Bring manly power here to us: you are manly minded toward us.

5. Now through these dominating forces of yours (may we be) in your
   shelter.
   May we be provided with a good herdsman, o Indra of a hundred
   resolves; may we be provided with a good herdsman, o champion.

V.39 (393) Indra

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

As was already noted, this hymn is paired with V.38, sharing some vocabulary and themes, but this one is more coherent in both syntax and thought. The first three verses urge Indra to give in abundance, while in the last two (4–5) the poet urges his fellow Atris to praise the god.

1. What is given by you in profusion, bright Indra, possessor of the stone,
   that largesse bring here to us with both hands full, you finder of goods.
2. What you consider worthy to be chosen, that heaven-ruling thing bring
   here, Indra.
   Might we know you as the unbounded (ocean) for giving.
3. Your thought, famed and lofty, which is eager to give, should be realized.
   With it split apart even the strongholds for plunder to win, possessor of
   the stone.
4. Most bounteous of bounteous ones, the king of the settled domains,
   Indra (do I call) nearby for you [=Atris?] to eulogize. He takes pleasure
   in the hymns as well as the many (eulogies).
5. Just for him a poet's speech, for Indra a solemn word worthy to be
   pronounced;
   for him whose vehicle is the sacred formulation the Atris strengthen their
   hymns, the Atris beautify their hymns.

V.40 (394) Indra and the Myth of Svarbhānu [Anukramaṇī: Indra 1–4, Sūrya 5, Atri 6–9]

Atri Bhauma
9 verses: uṣṇih 1–3, triṣṭubh 4, anuṣṭubh 5, 9, triṣṭubh 6–8

This hymn falls into two parts. It opens with four verses praising Indra in his bullish aspect, with hypnotic repetition of the word *vṛ́ṣan* "bull." The remainder (vss. 5–9) contains an allusive account of the myth of Svarbhānu, who "pierces the Sun with darkness," and the Sun's rescue by the seer Atri, a myth much treated in middle Vedic literature. For extensive discussion of the myth and this Ṛgvedic version of it, see Jamison (1991: Part II, pp. 131–303).

The myth makes sense once the identity of the mysterious enemy of the Sun is solved: Svarbhānu, literally "he who possesses the radiance of the sun," is actually the Sun's earthly counterpart, the god Agni. He punished the Sun for the latter's incestuous intercourse with his daughter (not mentioned in this hymn, but frequently found elsewhere), but because of the importance of sunlight for the maintenance of the world, the Sun had to be restored by the seer Atri (also the supposed poet of this hymn) through ritual means. The physical manifestations of the Sun's punishment betray his attacker's identity: "pierced with darkness" refers to sunspots, dark spots on the sun as if burnt by fire, and the enveloping darkness of smoke is depicted in verse 6.

Note that the Svarbhānu portion (5–9) is a perfect omphalos hymn. The two outer verses (5, 9) are multiforms of each other and in a different meter from the verses in between; the middle verse (7) is the only direct speech; the intermediate vss. (6, 8) both mention Atri in the singular, both deal with the *māyā́* ("magic spells") of Svarbhānu, and both have complementary vocabulary: *diváḥ/diví, sū́ryam/sū́ryasya, gūḷhám/aghukṣat, bráhmaṇā/brahmā́*.

1. Drive hither. Drink the soma pressed with stones, you lord of soma—
   bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of obstacles.
2. Bullish is the pressing stone, bullish the exhilarating drink, bullish this
      pressed soma here.
   Bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of obstacles.
3. Bullish I call upon you, the bullish, o possessor of the mace, with your
      bright help.
   Bullish Indra, with your bulls, best smasher of Vr̥tra.
4. Possessor of the soma-dregs, possessor of the mace, the bull overcoming
      the powerful, the tempestuous king, smasher of Vr̥tra, soma-drinker—
   having yoked them, he will come hither with his two fallow bays. Indra
      will become exhilarated at the Midday Pressing.

5. When, o Sun, Svarbhānu Āsura pierced you with darkness,
   like a befuddled man not knowing the territory did the living beings
      perceive.
6. Then, o Indra, when you smashed down from heaven the circling magic
      spells of Svarbhānu,
   Atri with the fourth formulation found the sun, hidden by darkness
      because of (an act) contrary to commandment.
7. [The Sun:] "O Atri, let him not, deceived by jealousy and fear, swallow
      me, who am one of yours.
   You are an ally whose bounty is real; do you and King Varuṇa help
      me here."
8. The possessor of the sacred formulation [=Atri], having yoked the
      pressing stones, serving the gods with plain reverence, doing his
      utmost,

Atri placed the eye of the sun in heaven. He hid away the magic spells of Svarbhānu.

9. Which sun Svarbhānu Āsura pierced with darkness,
 that one the Atris found, for no others were able.

The following series of hymns to the All Gods / All the Gods (V.41–51) contains some of the most complex and difficult poetry in the R̥gveda (along with some restfully more straightforward hymns), including the hymn that Geldner called "the hardest hymn in the R̥gveda" ("das schwierigste Lied des R̥V"), V.44. Although the placement of this series within the Saṃhitā was dictated by the strict and mechanical rules of numerical arrangement discussed before (see Intro. pp. 10–11), it is sometimes difficult for us not to view this set of hymns as a type of omphalos in the larger structure of the R̥gveda. They are found in more or less the middle of Maṇḍala V (which has 87 hymns), which is more or less the middle maṇḍala of the Family Books (II–VII—keeping in mind that, though V is preceded by three maṇḍalas and followed by two, the preceding maṇḍalas are shorter: II–IV contain 163 hymns, VI–VII 179, remarkably close to equivalence). Just as the omphalos verse in a hymn contains the enigma, the mysterious message of the hymn, so we could view these All God hymns as the mystical center of the older R̥gveda.

V.41 (395) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
20 verses: triṣṭubh, except atijagatī 16–17, ekapadā virāj 20

This hymn is quite intricate on the verbal level, though in paraphrase and in translation it may seem to lack interest. Every verse (but 17) names at least one divinity—many verses have several—chosen from among both the most prominent gods of the Vedic pantheon (e.g., Mitra and Varuṇa in vs. 1) and distinctly marginal figures like Āptya (vs. 9). There does not seem to be any one dominant god or set of gods: though the Maruts are mentioned more than any other gods (vss. 2, 5, 11, 13, 16), there is little particularly Marutian vocabulary or imagery. (It might be remembered, however, that the longest series of Marut hymns in the R̥gveda, the Śyāvāśva hymns of remarkable poetic quality, immediately follow the All God hymns in this maṇḍala [V.52–61]). The content of the hymn as a whole seldom deviates from invitations to the sacrifice with promises of offerings, and prayers for divine gifts in return. Verses 16–17 are in a different meter and seem to be bringing the hymn to a close, especially 17, in which, as often, the poet makes a meta-reference to the hymn just concluded. If this is so, verses 18–20 are an afterthought.

The seemingly unordered series of gods who receive the honor of a verse (or part thereof) may exemplify a covert theme of choice or alternatives, underlined by the

use of the simple conjunction "or" (*vā*) as the verbal "hero" of the beginning of the hymn (vss. 1–3, returning at the end, vss. 15, 19).

Unfortunately other pieces of verbal play are essentially untranslatable, like the unusual sequence of two monosyllables at the end of the first half-verse of verse 1: ... *vā dé* ("or ... to be given"), which, scrambled, produces the target of the hymn: *devā(ḥ)* "gods."

1. Which one now, performing the truth for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa, is to be given (a good thing) from great heaven or one stemming from the earth
   or (one) at the seat of truth [=ritual ground]—you two should protect us—or which of you two (is ready) to give prizes to the sacrificer like the prizes for one who wins cattle?
2. They—Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Āyu, Indra lord of the R̥bhus, and the Maruts—shall take pleasure in us,
   or (in those) who with reverences provide a well-plaited (hymn), a praise for Rudra who gives rewards—(they, the gods) in joint enjoyment.
3. You two Aśvins, driving quickest on the flight of the wind, in the flourishing of your chariotry, are to be summoned hither.
   Or (you priests), present a thought to the lord of heaven [=Rudra], like (soma) stalks to the worshipful.
4. The heavenly victor with Kaṇva as Hotar, (i.e.,) Trita from heaven, and the Wind, and Agni in joint enjoyment,
   Pūṣan, and all-nourishing Bhaga have come to the (ritual) presentation like those with swiftest horses to a contest.
5. Present your wealth of yoked horses; for help in the quest for wealth a visionary thought should be produced.
   The Hotar [=Agni] is well disposed because of the ways of (the company of) fire-priests, which are (also?) the ways of you powerful ones, o Maruts.
6. Set Vāyu, who hitches up the chariot, in front; in front the god, the inspired admirer, with your chants—
   (you,) aiming (straight), serving the truth, (set in front) the creators of plenty. Let them, (like?) good wives, create (plenty) here (in exchange) for our visionary thought.
7. I hasten to the two young maidens of heaven with your praiseworthy fortifying (hymns), with conspicuous chants.
   Night and Dawn, like ones who know all, through the days convey the sacrifice here for the mortal.
8. I chant for you to the men granting prosperity, to the Lord of the Dwelling-Place, to Tvaṣṭar, as I give;
   with reverences (I chant) to the trees, the plants, along with the rich Holy Place, in the quest for wealth.

9. Let the mountains behave like family, to thrust out progeny for us—
   they who are like good heroes.
   Āptya, admired, always worthy of our sacrifice, the manly one, will
   strengthen our laud in preeminence.
10. I have praised the embryo of the terrestrial bull, (as) Trita (has praised)
   the Child of the Waters with a well-twisted (hymn).
   Agni is sung with fortifying (hymns) like (a horse) at running.
   Flame-haired, he liquefies the trees.
11. How shall we speak to the great Rudrian (troop) [=Maruts]; what (shall
   we say) to observant Bhaga, for wealth?
   Let the waters and the plants help us, and Heaven, the woods, and the
   mountains whose hair is trees.
12. Let him hear our hymns—the lord of nourishments; he [=Agni] is the
   vigorous encircler, passing more quickly than a cloud.
   Let them hear—the Waters, resplendent like the fortifications of a
   mountain that encloses the offering ladles [=cows].
13. Just by our knowledge, o great ones [=Maruts], we shall say which are
   your ways, wondrous ones, as we acquire what is choice.
   And like birds, those of good essence [=Maruts] swoop down here
   in pursuit with their fluttering to the mortal held by murderous
   weapons.
14. I will call on the heavenly and earthly breeds and on the waters for the
   good battler (/very bounteous one) [=Indra].
   Let the days increase and the hymns tipped with gold; let the waters, the
   conquered floods increase.
15. Step after step old age has been secured for me, either (by her) who is
   the able Shielding Goddess or by the protectors.
   Let the mother, the great Rasā, accompany us along with our patrons,
   she with hands outstretched, with winnings outstretched.
16. How might we ritually serve with reverence those of good drops,
   the Maruts traveling their ways, at the invitation—the Maruts of
   advancing fame, at the invitation?
   Let Ahi Budhnya not set us up to suffer harm. For us let there be
   winnings at the distribution (of prizes).
17. In just these words now, for the sake of offspring along with cattle, the
   mortal (seeks to) win you, o gods—the mortal (seeks to) win you
   here, o gods.
   Otherwise Dissolution might swallow the secure depository beneficial
   to this body, my own old age.
18. Might we obtain that favor of yours, o gods, good ones, the nourishing
   refreshment of the cow, through (this) recitation.
   That gracious goddess of good drops [/gifts] should come toward us at
   a run, for our welfare.

19. Let Iḍā, mother of the flock, greet us, or let Urvaśī, along with the rivers.
    Or Urvaśī Bṛhaddivā, being sung, covering herself, (mother) of the (ritual) presentation, mother of Āyu,
20. Of the nourishing prosperity [/of the prosperity of Ūrjavya]—let her accompany us.

V.42 (396) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
18 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā virāj 17

Like the last hymn, this one enumerates a number of different gods to whom we direct our praise, beginning, as V.41 did, with Mitra and Varuṇa, and the concern, as in that hymn, is generally the ritual exchange of mortal praise for immortal gifts. Or such is the structure of the opening (vss. 1–6) and concluding (vss. 11–18) sections of the hymn. In the middle (vss. 7–10) Bṛhaspati (in vs. 10 with the Maruts) is called upon to be generous to generous patrons but to unleash destructive power against stingy patrons and non-sacrificers. As Hanns-Peter Schmidt has noted, these hostile actions are uncharacteristic of Bṛhaspati but typical of Indra, just as the association of Indra with the sacred formulation in verse 4 would be more expected of Bṛhaspati than Indra. He therefore argues (1968: 84–86) that verses 4–10 form a unity in this hymn, with Bṛhaspati serving as an epithet of Indra.

Although the gods in the enumerative verses are often named, some verses are riddles, describing the god without naming him (1cd, 6, 13, 14) or naming him only in the second half of the verse (3, 11). Such puzzles are common in All God hymns.

At the end of the hymn (vss. 14–17) the poet expresses the hope that his praise should reach in all directions, to all three worlds, creating wide space for him and his companions (in the final single-pāda verse 17). (Verse 18 is adopted from Aśvin hymns later in the maṇḍala [V.76.5, 77.5], perhaps to introduce the Aśvins, who are otherwise unmentioned, into this All God hymn.)

1. May the most availing hymn now reach Varuṇa with its visionary power; may it reach Mitra, Bhaga, Aditi.
   Let him hear it—the lord whose womb is the dappled (cow/ghee), who has five Hotars, whose path cannot be transgressed, who is joy itself [=Aryaman].
2. May Aditi grab hold of my praise, like a mother the beloved son of her heart.
   The dear sacred formulation that has been established by the gods, that is joy itself to Mitra and Varuṇa—may I (grab hold of it).

3. Rouse the best poet of poets. Wet him with honey, with ghee.
   He—god Savitar—will propel to us the golden goods that have been held forth and set out.
4. Through your thought, Indra, join us with cows, with patrons, with well-being, o possessor of the fallow bays—
   and with the sacred formulation established by the gods, with the favor of the gods who are worthy of the sacrifice.
5. God Bhaga, Savitar, Share of Wealth [/Aṃśa], Indra, the complete victor over Vṛtra and riches,
   the lord of the Ṛbhus, Vāja [=a Ṛbhu], and Plenitude—let the powerful immortals aid us.
6. We will proclaim the deeds of the one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra], unopposable, victorious, unaging.
   None previous to you, bounteous one, nor later, nor anyone at all right now has achieved your manly power.
7. Praise the first conferring of treasure; (praise) Bṛhaspati, the winner of riches,
   who, the most wealful for him who chants and praises, will come here, with many goods, to the one who repeatedly invokes (him).
8. O Bṛhaspati, the bounteous ones accompanied by your help, who are invulnerable and possessing good heroes,
   who are givers of horses or givers of cows, who are givers of garments, the well-portioned ones [=patrons]—on them (confer) riches.
9. Dissipate the possessions of those who benefit by our hymns without giving.
   Those violating the commandments, grown strong at forward thrusting, the haters of the sacred formulation—keep them away from the sun.
10. Whoever lauds the demons at the invitation to the gods, run him over, Maruts, with your wheel-less (chariots).
    Whoever will scorn the labor of the one who labors for you, he will render his own desires empty when *he* sweats (at ritual labor).
11. Praise him, who has the good arrow and the good bow, who holds sway over every healing remedy.
    Sacrifice to Rudra for great benevolence; with acts of reverence offer friendship to the god, the lord.
12. The masters of the house, the workmen who have good hands [=Ṛbhus?], the wives of the bull, the rivers fashioned for wide extension,
    Sarasvatī, Bṛhaddivā, and Rākā—let the resplendent ones, showing favor, create a wide realm (for us).
13. I present to the great one who grants good shelter [=Tvaṣṭar] wisdom (in the form of) a hymn just newly being born,
    to him who, bulging [?] in the belly of his daughter, changing his forms [=Tvaṣṭar as father of Viśvarūpa?], made this (world? form?) for us.

14. May our lovely praise now reach to the thundering, bellowing lord of refreshment [=Parjanya], o singer—
    to him who, rich in clouds, rich in water, sets in motion the two world-halves with his lightning, as he sprinkles them.
15. May this praise reach up to the Marutian troop, to the youthful sons of Rudra.
    Desire calls me to wealth with well-being. Praise the unruly ones with dappled horses.
16. May this praise reach to earth, to the midspace, to the trees, to the plants, for wealth.
    Let every god be easy for me to invoke. Let Mother Earth not set us in disfavor.
17. May we come to be in broad unconstricted (space), o gods.
18. May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
    Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.43 (397) All Gods

Atri Bhauma
17 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā virāj 16

Like many All God hymns, this one enumerates in individual verses divinities deserving praise, and the emphasis is on the ritual and the gods' presence at and participation in it. There is perhaps more detail about ritual performance than in many such hymns (see, e.g., vss. 1, 3–7), and this focus on the ritual is observable in two other features of the hymn. On the one hand, the god Agni dominates the last part of the hymn (vss. 12–15), under the name/epithet Bṛhaspati in verse 12, unnamed but clearly identified by his characteristics in verse 13, called Āyu in verse 14, and finally named in verse 15ab. Such concentration on deified ritual fire in an All God hymn is somewhat surprising. Further, the middle verse of this hymn (excluding the repeated verses at the end), verse 7, is directed not toward a god but a ritual implement, the gharma pot, used in the Pravargya ritual and often the focus of priestly speculation.

1. Let the milk-cows, swift to their tasks, not neglectful, come close to us here with their milk, their honey.
   For great wealth, the inspired poet, the singer keeps invoking the seven lofty (cows [=rivers?]), who are joy itself.
2. With lovely praise, with reverence Heaven and Earth are to be turned hither—they who are not neglectful with regard to the prize-contest.
   The Father, the Mother who has honeyed speech and good hands—let the two glorious ones aid us in every bout.

3. Adhvaryus—having made the honeyed (drinks), present the pure dear (soma) to Vāyu.
   Like the Hotar, drink first of this honey of ours, god; we have given it to you for your exhilaration.
4. The ten fingers and the two arms hitch up the stone—the two arms with good hands that are the laboring priests [/quellers] of soma.
   The plant, well(-handled by) the fists, has milked out the sap of honey that dwells on the mountain, shimmering and pure.
5. The soma has been pressed for you who have enjoyed (it)—for will and skill, for lofty exhilaration.
   Indra, bring nearby the two dear fallow bays, those amenable to the chariot-pole at the yoking to your chariot, when you are being invoked.
6. Hither to us, in agreement (with her), (bring) great Devotion [/Aramati], lady goddess, on whom the oblation is bestowed with reverence,
   the lofty knower of truth—for the exhilarating drink of honey, bring her hither, Agni, along the paths the gods travel.
7. The one which the inspired poets anoint, like (the ritual grass) as they spread it, heating it with fire like (the offering of the sacrificial animal) with its omentum:
   the truth-(sing)ing gharma (drink/pot) has been set here on the fire like the dearest son on the lap of his father.
8. Let the great, lofty, most availing hymn come like a messenger to invoke the Aśvins.
   (O Aśvins,) joy itself, drive nearby on the same chariot; go to the treasury (of honey) as if to the chariot-pole, like the axle-pin into the wheel-nave.
9. I have shown forth an expression of reverence to the very strong, powerful Pūṣan and to Vāyu,
   who are impellers of thoughts by reason of their bounty and treasure-givers of the prize in their own nature.
10. Convey all the Maruts according to their (individual) names, according to their (individual) forms, o Jātavedas, when you are invoked.
    The sacrifice, the hymns, and the lovely praise of the singer—all you Maruts, all come (to these) with your help.
11. Hither to us from lofty heaven, from the mountain let Sarasvatī, deserving the sacrifice, come to the sacrifice.
    Let the goddess, having enjoyed our call, turning toward the ghee, listen willingly to our capable speech.
12. Here on the seat make him sit—the ritual adept, dark-backed, lofty Bṛhaspati (as Agni).
    Sitting on his womb, shining here in the house, golden-colored, reddish—(him) may we serve.

13. The enduring one belonging to lofty heaven, the bestower—let him come with all his succors when he is invoked—
clothing himself in his wives, the plants, not neglectful, a bull with tripartite horn, conferring vigor [=Agni].
14. In the highest, gleaming footstep of the mother of Āyu [=Urvaśī] the admiring abundant [?] ones have come.
With their oblations bestowed with reverence, they groom the beloved child [=Agni] in his dwelling place, like the Āyus.
15. Lofty vigor for lofty you, Agni, do those rivalrous (priestly) pairs, who reach old age through their insight, pursue.
Let every god be easy for me to invoke. Let Mother Earth not set us in disfavor.
16. May we come to be in broad unconstricted (space), o gods.
17. May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.44 (398) All Gods

Avatsāra Kāśyapa, etc.
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14–15

As noted above, Geldner considers this the hardest hymn in the R̥gveda ("das schwierigste Lied des R̥V"), and a judgment very like this is shared by other scholars (e.g., Oldenberg, who deems most of it "uncertain or hopeless" ["meist fraglich oder hoffnungslos"]). Although in our opinion there are numerous contenders for "hardest hymn" in the R̥gveda (X.106, for example, some of which appears to be written in unbreakable code), this one is certainly near the top of any such list.

The difficulties are found in every aspect of the hymn, beginning with the fact that the divine subject(s) of the various verses of the heart of the hymn are never identified. Then there are lexical problems: a number of rare words or hapaxes; morphological problems, including unusual inflectional and derivational morphology; syntactic problems such as frequent lack of verbs, unclear referents, unclear syntactic roles, and so on—not to mention a general lack of superficial coherence, both between verses and within verses. For all these reasons, the translation given is provisional in general and in many details.

Nonetheless, it is possible to form a hypothesis about what the hymn is "about," and this hypothesis allows one to interpret many of the ambiguities within this framework. Our translation reflects this hypothesis, and in a number of places bracketed identifications have been inserted to guide readers—though we have tried to keep these to a minimum, to avoid too much clutter in the poetry itself, which

despite its frequent lack of clarity possesses, in our opinion, both power and beauty, and to allow readers to produce their own interpretations of the hymn.

To be brief, the hypothesis with which we operate is that each verse is applicable to both Agni and Soma, the two crucial deified ritual substances, and therefore many of the verbal contortions are the result of attempting to produce phraseology that is meaningful for each god simultaneously. (This hypothesis is adumbrated by Geldner in his introduction to the hymn, where he suggests that some verses can be read with intentional double reference to Agni and Soma, though he clearly does not consider the whole hymn in this light.) The final two verses (14–15), in a different meter and almost mechanically responsive to each other, mention both Soma and Agni, and may be intended as an implicit answer to the riddle posed by the rest of the hymn. In any case, if our hypothesis is correct, the poem is the forerunner of the much later kāvya tours de force in which, for example, the plots of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa are narrated at the same time.

The Soma/Agni simultaneity is especially prominent in the first part of the hymn. Toward the middle of the hymn (starting around vs. 8) another theme emerges, that of the poet learning his craft, seeking true speech. What unites the two themes is the sense that poetic inspiration comes from the ritual itself and from the mysteries of the identification of the two most important ritual substances, so that the poet gains his verbal mastery as the sacrifice progresses. But it is also the case that the sacrifice needs his poetry in order to be properly carried through, and so the poetic skill the poet gains from his contemplation of the mysteries of the sacrifice is put to use immediately in the next verses (9–11), and the result always desired by R̥gvedic sacrificers, the epiphany of Indra on the sacrificial ground, is achieved in verse 12. Because of his contribution to the success of the sacrifice, the poet is lauded in the last verse (13) before the responsive solution to the riddle as the foundation of the whole sacrifice. Thus, the hymn is both a static meditation on a central sacrificial mystery and a roughly chronological progression through the sacrifice.

One of the enigmatic features of the hymn found throughout the hymn is the regular presence of unidentified feminine plurals (vss. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11), especially intriguing in verse 7. Identifying the likely referent(s) for these feminines as the hymn unfolds shows the developing complexity of the hymnic universe of discourse. In the earlier part of the hymn the feminines most probably refer, in the realm of Agni, to the streams of ghee offered into Agni (and also perhaps to the plants he burns)—while, in the realm of Soma, to the waters that swell the soma stalks and to the cows' milk mixed with the pressed soma. As the figure of the poet joins the hymn, the feminines can have a third set of referents, the insights that provide him with poetic inspiration and the words/songs that result from them. (All of the underlying nouns in all three referential systems are feminine in gender and conceptually female.) This complex web of reference is beautifully (or dauntingly) on display in verse 11. In our reading of this verse all three sets of feminines are not bound, that is, not in use, when the soma is being brought to the ritual and the sacrifice has not yet started. But when soma the plant is made into soma the exhilarating

drink, all three sets of feminines are hitched up: the poet's words are recited, the streams of milk approach the pressed soma, and the streams of ghee are poured into the fire. The priests direct the various females to their appropriate goals, and at the end of the ritual they are "unhitched."

As an aside, we might mention what appears to be a sly joke, located in almost the middle of the hymn (minus the final riddle-solving verses): in 6a, after five verses of exhausting enigmas with many more to come, the poet says, "Just as he appears, so is he said (to be)"—an assertion about the transparent clarity of the subject that the frustrated audience may view with bitter irony. However, it is of course not merely a joke, for the poet's task is to find the hidden mystical truths of the universe and express them in true words, in *bráhman*. No matter how superficially baffling, the *bráhman* captures how "it really is," and so the poet asserts here.

Although numerous puzzles remain in the hymn, we hope to have shown that it is far from "hopeless." It can be read as a consistent unity (though the unity we see may not be the only possible one), and, as so often with complex hymns in the R̥gveda, it is a meditation not only on the ritual but also on poetic craft.

1. Him—in the primordial way, in the earlier way, in every way, in this way here—(him who is) preeminence (itself), who sits on the ritual grass and finds the sun,
   him facing toward (our) community will you milk out with song, the swift one conquering (the cows? the waters?), among whom you grow strong.
2. Lovely to be seen for beauty are those (tips [of flame/soma streams]), which are the sun of the lower (realm). (As the possessor) of (those) tips who shines forth (even) for the one who doesn't impel (largesse),
   you are a good herdsman, not for deceiving, o strong-willed one. Far beyond the trickeries of magic your name was (set) in truth.
3. The steed does the oblation follow (and) its [=oblation's] elements are true; the Hotar who goes without harm brings might.
   Always stretching out along the ritual grass, the bullish child, the unaging youth is placed in the middle with his outgrowth.
4. These (hymns?) of yours, easy to yoke, (go) forth on their course to seek the twinned sisters [= butter offerings/waters], strong through truth, that (go) downward toward yonder one [=Agni/Soma],
   with reins easy to control, directing everything. Krivi [=Agni/Soma/the poet (<kavi)?] steals (their) names [=butter offerings/waters?] at their precipitous fall.
5. Quivering with your powers of endurance (toward) the one covered with little "twigs" that grasps (you) at the pressing [=firewood/sheep's fleece?], resounding among the clearly pregnant (females [=plants/waters/cows]),
   you beautify yourself at the recitations for the streams, o you with a straight song. Wax strong over the wives, (you who are) alive in the ceremony.

6. Just as he appears, so is he said (to be): They united (him) with his effective shadow in the waters—
(him) who wins wideness for us—(wins) the great (earth), the broad expanse, and lofty immovable might that brings good heroes.
7. (When) unwed, he pursues (women); once he has wives, he truly out(strips) (all) contenders with a mind that seeks conflict—(as) the sun, the sage poet.
He with his goods near at hand will vanquish the (sun's) heat and will win shelter for us, which protects (our) patrimony on all sides.
8. He [=poet] pursues the older sonority of the seers by means of (you [=Agni/Soma]), the beacon of this arrangement [=sacrifice]. Among which (females [=waters/cows/insights]) your name (is),
in whatever (place) it has been set, he will find it [=sonority of the seers] through his industry. He who makes the journey by himself, he will get it right.
9. The foremost of these (females) has stepped down into the ocean (of soma). The pressing is not harmed into which she is guided.
Here the heart of the working poet [?] does not tremble, where the thought is found that is his bond to the purified (soma/fire).
10. For he (has a bond) with the insights of the mental lordship of the one deserving the sacrifice, who speaks just so and aims toward the same goal.
With the delightful (poems) [/lusty (warriors)] of the stealthy one we shall win the most expansive prize, to be brought to success only by the wise.
11. (While still) a falcon, (soma) is unboundedness for these (females [=poems/waters/cows]); (when it becomes) the exhilarating drink, it is their girding—for the one deserving the sacrifice, provided with all desirable things, master of artifice.
They [=priests] make (the females) set their goal to go to one after the other (of Soma and Agni) in turn. They know (that) unharnessing and drinking in rounds (are) at hand.
12. The one worthy of the sacrifice, always granting, has smashed away hatreds. "Twisted" (here) by the arms [=activity (of you, the priests)], finding (the praise) that is heard, he is surpassingly in partnership with you.
He [=Indra] comes in response to both the choice ones [=Agni and Soma], and he is radiant when he has a share in the troop [=Maruts] with their (chariots?) that drive forth easily.
13. Bearing the pressed (soma) of the sacrificer, master of the settlements, he [=poet] is the udder, the ladle of all visionary thoughts.
He bears the (two) milk-cows [=Heaven and Earth, or Agni and Soma]; the milk, full of sap, has been brought to perfection. The one who recites following (his teacher), he learns, not the one who sleeps.

14. Who stays awake, him the verses desire; who stays awake, to him go the melodies.
    Who stays awake, to him does this Soma say: "I am at home in fellowship with you."
15. Agni stays awake: him the verses desire. Agni stays awake: to him go the melodies.
    Agni stays awake: to him does this Soma say, "I am at home in fellowship with you."

V.45 (399) All Gods

Sadāpr̥̥ṇa Ātreya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A lovely hymn, both narrating the opening of the Vala cave by the power of the Aṅgirases' poetic speech and welcoming the dawn of a new day and the sunrise on that mythic model. The hymn begins (vss. 1–3) with a description of sunrise, with no overt mention of the myth, though it clearly lurks in the background. The poet is concerned to apply the mythic model to the current sacrificial situation. He initiates the ritual in verse 4, and then in the two, paired, middle verses in the hymn (5–6), an omphalos, he exhorts his priestly comrades to achieve the poetic vision (*dhī́*) that has served others well in the past. The particular past he has in mind becomes clear in the following two verses (7–8), which depict the opening of the Vala cave and the Aṅgirases' role in it. The next two verses first pray that the Sun will come up (9) and then announce that he has arisen (10). The exhortations in verses 5–6 have worked! In the last verse (11) the poet (addressing himself, as well as his priestly colleagues) exults over this success: "the poetic vision that wins the sun," the same one that the Aṅgirases possessed, has now been acquired, and it will bring welfare to the community. It is noteworthy that Indra, the usual hero of the Vala myth, is not mentioned in connection with it (though he does make an appearance in vs. 4); presumably the poet wishes to identify himself and his priestly comrades with the chorus of Indra's associates, the Aṅgirases, rather than with the god.

A brief grammatical digression is necessary here in order to show the particular artfulness of this hymn. As noted, the first three verses already describe, in some detail, the dawn and the sunrise, and so it might be thought that the sunrise in verse 10 is an anticlimax. But a remarkable fact about the first three verses is that the description of the sunrise there is couched almost entirely in the verb form known as the injunctive, which has no overt marker of tense. Although its default interpretation is past tense, it can be used also to depict "timeless" events. (Since English lacks such a verbal category, we have used the present tense here.) The sunrise in verses 1–3 is both the mythic model of the Vala-Aṅgiras narrative and, more important, the *ideal* sunrise to which the poet aspires. In contrast to the insistent

injunctives in these verses, when today's sunrise, the successful result of the sacrificers' and poet's efforts, is depicted in verse 10, all four verb forms have the overt marker of past tense, the so-called augment, making it clear that the sunrise there has indeed (just) occurred. Another example of R̥gvedic poets' sensitivity to grammatical categories and their ingenious deployment of them.

1. Through knowledge unloosing the stone of heaven with hymns—the shining (beacons) of the approaching dawn come (out of it)—
   he uncloses (the doors) to the enclosures: the Sun comes up. The god has opened up the doors belonging to the sons of Manu.
2. The Sun unlooses his beauty like an ensign; the mother of the cows [=Dawn], recognizing (the way), comes here from the pen.
   The rivers (of light) have floods (broad and high) like plains, have floods that chew (their banks). Heaven becomes firm like a well-fixed pillar.
3. In response to this hymn here the womb of the mountain (gapes open) for the primordial birth of the great ones [=dawns].
   The mountain gapes open; heaven achieves success; desiring to win the earth, they [=poets/Aṅgirases] exhaust themselves.
4. With well-spoken words pleasing to the gods, Indra and Agni are now to be called upon by you for help,
   for with solemn speeches sage poets of good sacrifice who desire to win always sacrifice to the Maruts.
5. Come on now! Today let us become possessed of good poetic vision. Let us send misfortune forth a wide way away.
   Let us put hatreds aside in the distance; let us go forward to the sacrificer.
6. Come on! Comrades, let us create (the same) poetic vision with which the mother opened the enclosure of the cow,
   with which Manu conquered Viśiśipra, with which the wandering merchant reached the overflowing source (of goods?).
7. The (pressing) stone, guided by the hand, bellowed there, the stone along with which the Navagvas sang for ten months.
   Saramā, going after the truth, found the cows; the Aṅgiras made all things real.
8. When all the Aṅgirases roared along with the cows at the brightening of this great (dawn),
   at the fountainhead of them [=cows], in the highest seat, Saramā found the cows along the path of truth.
9. Let the Sun drive here with his seven horses to the tract of land stretching widely at (the end of) his long course.
   Let the quick falcon fly to the stalk and the youthful poet shine as he goes among the cows.

10. The Sun has mounted the gleaming flood, now that he has yoked his golden, straight-backed (horses).
    Like a boat through the water the wise ones guided him; the waters, giving heed, stood still nearby.
11. You have acquired the poetic vision that wins the sun in the waters, with which the Navagvas passed ten months.
    Through this vision may we be those who have gods as our herdsmen; through this vision may we pass beyond constraint.

V.46 (400) All Gods

Pratikṣatra Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 2, 8

Renou pronounces this hymn "banal," and certainly the long enumeration of divinities, listed with little or no characterization or action, does not engage the audience in the same way that the intricacies of the previous All God hymns in this maṇḍala do. However, there are two features of note in the hymn, and these features have, in our view, a covert connection. The hymn ends with two verses praising the Wives of the Gods in general and particular gods' wives by title: Indrāṇī, Agnāyī (wife of Agni), Aśvinī, Varuṇānī (vs. 8); the Wives (of the Gods) are also mentioned in verse 2, and other goddesses are also featured in the hymn: Sarasvatī (vs. 2), Aditi (vss. 3, 6), the Waters (vs. 3), the Rivers (vs. 6). The second feature is that the first verse is very different from the rest—the invocation of divinities only begins in verse 2. In verse 1 the 1st-person poet-sacrificer describes himself as hitched to a chariot-pole and, despite the effort involved, does not wish to be released from this yoking.

Now it is certainly possible that the yoking image only refers to the poet-sacrificer's usual tasks at the sacrifice. However, in conjunction with the emphasis on the gods' wives (*pátnīḥ*) later in the hymn, we suggest that what this hymn is ever so delicately concerning itself with is an important and controversial innovation: the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife (*pátnī*) as a necessary participant in the ritual. As has been argued elsewhere (Jamison 2011, forthcoming a and b), though the Sacrificer's Wife is a fixture already in early middle Vedic ritual (see Jamison 1996a), there is no evidence for her participation in early R̥gvedic ritual. The introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife in the middle to late R̥gveda (presumably beginning with only one or a few priestly circles) seems to have been, understandably, controversial, and though it is not referred to directly in the text, there are covert arguments, pro and con, in a number of hymns. One of the important images of the new ritual pairing of Sacrificer and Wife is that of a pair of draft-animals jointly yoked to a chariot-pole (e.g., VIII.33.18, X.102.10), pulling the sacrifice together, though with the husband maintaining a slight edge in strength and effort. It seems quite possible that this image is found in verse 1: the male yoked to the pole, pulling a feminine

referent (the chariot-pole, which is grammatically feminine, but also secondarily the wife), and with no desire to return to the old state of affairs. The last word in this verse, *neṣati* "he will lead," reminds of the priestly title, Neṣṭar "Leader," the priest whose duty it is to lead the Sacrificer's Wife around the sacrificial ground in later śrauta ritual; he is already marginally represented in the R̥gveda as a leader of the Wives of the Gods (see especially I.15.3).

If this scenario is correct—that verse 1 represents an argument in favor of the new model of sacrifice including the Sacrificer's Wife—then the lists of gods that follow might be a form of insurance. Every possible divinity is called upon to witness and give tacit approval to the innovation. And the Wives of the Gods, who provide the divine model for the Sacrificer's Wife, are called on especially insistently to come to the sacrifice and provide their help and support.

1. I, a knowing one, have yoked myself like a courser to the chariot-pole;
   I draw it [/her=ritual wife], which [/who] furthers (the sacrifice?) while seeking help.
   I do not desire to be released from it [/her], nor to turn back here again. The knowing one who goes in front will lead straight along the paths.
2. O Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, (All?) Gods, o Marutian troop and Viṣṇu—provide!
   Both of the Aśvins, Rudra, and the Wives (of the Gods), Pūṣan, Bhaga, Sarasvatī shall enjoy themselves.
3. Indra and Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, Aditi, the Sun, Earth, Heaven, the Maruts, the Mountains, the Waters—
   I call on (and on) Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, Brahmaṇaspati, also on Fortune, Laud, Savitar, for help.
4. And may Viṣṇu and Wind—the unfailing ones—the Treasure-Giver and Soma create joy for us.
   And may the R̥bhus and Aśvins, and Tvaṣṭar and Vibhvan, consent to wealth for us.
5. And may there come to us here this Marutian troop, dwelling in heaven, worthy of the sacrifice, to sit on the ritual grass.
   May Br̥haspati and Pūṣan provide to us shelter for defense, and Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
6. And may these mountains, receiving good praises, and the very bright rivers be (there) for our protection.
   May Bhaga, the apportioner, come here with capacity (and) help. Let Aditi of broad extent hear my call.
7. The Wives of the Gods—let them willingly help us; let them help us to propagate, to win prizes.
   (You) who belong to the earth, (you) who (live) under the commandment of the waters, you goddesses, receiving good invocations, give shelter to us.

8. And let the ladies, the Wives of the Gods pursue (the offering)—Indra's wife, Agni's wife, the Aśvins' queen.
   Let Rodasī and Varuṇa's wife pay heed. Let the goddesses pursue (the offering), which is the regular season for women.

V.47 (401) All Gods

Pratiratha Ātreya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Each verse in this short hymn presents a riddle: a description of a god or divine force whose name is withheld till late in the verse (1, 2) or suppressed entirely (3–6). This is not an uncommon tactic in All God hymns—a particularly deft example is VIII.29. This hymn presents several twists on this device. First, the characterizations seem regularly intended to mislead. For example, verse 1 has a feminine subject, and given the actions ascribed to her, the audience would expect the subject to be Dawn. But instead it is (Poetic) Inspiration (*manīṣā́*), here identified as the mother of Dawn (presumably because early-morning ritual poetry awakens Dawn and impels her to appear). Again, the attributes of the subject in verse 2 suggest Agni's flames, but the actual referent, the last word of the verse, is "Paths." Second, the riddles get harder as the hymn progresses. As was already noted, in verses 1 and 2 the solution is given, but thereafter it is not. In verse 3 the solution is fairly obvious by the end of the verse, but in verse 4 it is less so. Verse 5 announces itself as an enigma, and it seems to have double application to both the Sun and Agni. There is no agreed upon solution for verse 6.

Although this observation is unconnected to the riddle structure just discussed, each verse (but 5) has a form of *div/dyu* "heaven" (mostly *diváḥ*) (vs. 5 has *d(u)vé* "two," which is phonologically close). The final pāda of the hymn is an "homage to Heaven." Although this homage was not prepared thematically in the hymn, it was prepared verbally, by the repetition of the stem in various syntactic and semantic contexts.

1. Hitching up, she comes from heaven, she who is called the great mother of the Daughter (of Heaven [=Dawn]), waking (men),
   seeking to win, the youthful one, (coming) from the fathers, constantly calling in the seat (of the sacrifice)—(she is) Inspiration.
2. The nimble ones, hastening at their work, having mounted the nave of the immortal one,
   the endless, broad ones encircle heaven and earth on all sides—(they are) the Paths.
3. (He is) a bull, the sea, a reddish eagle (that) entered the womb of the age-old father.
   The dappled stone deposited in the middle of heaven strode across (the sky); he protects the two ends of the airy realm: (the Sun).

4. Four bear him, affording rest; ten give the infant suck, for (him to) move.
   Threefold are his highest cows; they circle around the ends of heaven in a single day: (Agni?).
5. Here is the wonder, the enigma, people: that the rivers move, but the waters stay,
   that two, other than his mother, bear him—the two were born hither and yon but are twins, of the same lineage: (Sun and Agni).
6. They stretch out their insightful thoughts, their (ritual) labors (as warp) for him; the mothers weave garments for their child.
   The bulls, delighting in coupling, go to their wives along the path of heaven.
7. Let this, o Mitra and Varuṇa, let this (hymn), o Agni, be luck and lifetime for us; let it be recited here.
   Might we obtain a fording place and firm standing. Homage to Heaven, the lofty seat.

V.48 (402) All Gods

Pratibhānu Ātreya
5 verses: jagatī

Another enigmatic hymn, made more baffling (as in a number of All God hymns in Maṇḍala V) by the lack of named referents for the descriptive phrases. There is certainly no consensus among scholars about these referents or about the purpose and structure of the hymn; indeed, a number of scholars consider this a "fragment." We find this unlikely, however. The fact that the most difficult verse by far is the middle one (3) suggests that this is an omphalos hymn, and moreover the final pāda (of vs. 5) is typical of a hymn ending.

In our opinion the hymn is appropriate to an early-morning ritual, and the two main referents are Dawn (/Dawns) and Agni. It begins with a typical rhetorical question: what poem to compose for the establishment of the ritual fire at dawn? The second half of verse 1 and first half of verse 2 present striking images of dawn (/dawns) breaking, ending verse 2 with a standard meditation on the aging that every new day brings to mortals. This thought is continued in verse 3, though the focus passes to Agni, who day after day at the ritual prepares the mace for Indra when Indra is present at the sacrifice, while the recurrent dawns mark the passage of time. Agni as the ritual fire remains the subject of the remainder of the hymn (vss. 4–5), with his identity becoming clearer and clearer.

1. What shall we compose for the self-ruling, self-glorious great one [=Agni?] for his own dear establishment,
   when the mistress of artifice [=Dawn?], choosing the waters in the dark cloud of the variegated dusky realm, stretches them forth.

2. They [=Dawns] have spread their hero-strengthening tracery along the same course through the whole dusky realm.
   A man devoted to the gods drives away the backward-facing (dawns) ever behind (him), and lengthens (his life) with those in front.
3. Along with the pressing stones, through (the periods) of the day and through the nights, he [=Agni?] sprinkles [=prepares] the best mace, when the master of artifice [=Indra?] (is there)—
   while into his own [=Agni's] house (the Dawns?) proceed by the hundred: rolling up the days, they unroll them (again).
4. I have looked upon this stream(ing) of his [=Agni], like (the swing) of an axe; I have looked upon his face, for the enjoyment of his form,
   when concurrently he establishes a treasure like a dwelling place abounding in food for the clan whose cry is "carry (the day)."
5. The four-faced one stretches with his tongue out straight, wearing pleasing (garb), putting the stranger in place (as) Varuna (does).
   We do not know, because of our human state, that (source?) from which Bhaga and Savitar will give what is choice.

V.49 (403) All Gods

Pratibha Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This hymn picks up where the previous hymn ended, with the gods Savitar ("Impeller") and Bhaga ("Fortune") and their bounty to mortals. These two gods are the topic of verses 1 and 2 here, and the first four (of five) verses concern the distribution of treasures to men, with a widening circle of gods responsible for these gifts. The context (as vs. 3 makes especially clear) is the distribution of dakṣiṇās (priestly gifts) at the early-morning ritual. Verse 5 asks for more general blessings than just wealth, but in its references to the "formless void" and to "wide space," it also seems to depict dawn, which creates visible and articulated space from formlessness.

1. I hasten toward god Savitar for you today, and toward Bhaga who apportions the treasure of Āyu.
   I would also turn hither you two superior men, who bring many enjoyments—seeking companionship with you, o Aśvins, day after day.
2. In response to the advance of the lord, as a knowing one offer friendship to god Savitar with hymns.
   A discerning one should call on (him) with reverence and on the preeminent one who apportions the treasure of Āyu.

3. Traveling to those lacking gifts, (each god) distributes valuables—Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aditi—at the dawning of the ruddy (Dawn).
   Indra, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni—the wondrous ones beget lucky days.
4. Then Savitar without assault is our defense, then the nurturing rivers follow suit,
   when, as Hotar of the ceremony, I call upon (them). May we be lords of wealth, with prizes as our treasure.
5. Those who have presented such great reverence to the good ones, who possess well-spoken speech for Mitra and Varuṇa,
   let the formless void go away (from them); make a wider space (for them). With the aid of Heaven and Earth may we rejoice.

V.50 (404) All Gods

Svastyātreya Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 5

This little hymn is surprisingly beset by difficulties, especially of syntax, reference, and meter. A particularly intricate set of syntactic constructions modulates from the singular "everyman" of verse 1, through an indefinite plural 3rd person, also representing men in general ("they" 2ab), to an identification of those indefinite men with "us" (2cd)—all of whom desire wealth and the companionship of the god "Leader," identified by the later tradition with Savitar (whom we met in V.49), though this identification is not necessary.

The scene shifts to the sacrifice in the next two verses (3–4), and the "we" of verse 2 becomes the "you" in verse 3, exhorted to do honor to the gods and their wives as guests at the sacrifice. The identities remain off-balance, however: the verb used for "honor" is one whose subject is usually a god and whose object a mortal, so role reversal is implied. And the gods are not identified as "gods," but rather called "men"—using the word *nṛ́*, which refers to especially elite, noble, or worthy men, and is often elsewhere applied to gods. Verse 4 depicts the mythic model of the soma sacrifice, with Indra invigorated by soma to be a winner. This leads us back to god Leader and prayers for wealth and well-being in response to our ritual offerings (vs. 5).

1. Every mortal would choose the companionship of the god Leader.
   Every one aims at wealth and would choose brilliance, in order to thrive.
2. They are yours, god Leader, as are the ones who (set out) to mimic them.
   As those—for they are to be infused (with good things)—may we be accompanied by wealth, by (other) desirable accompaniments.
3. Therefore, (all of you,) show favor here to the superior men [=gods] as our guests, also to their wives.
   Let the repeller repel into the distance anything standing in the path and (all) hatreds.

4. When the harnessed draft-animal will run, the beast seeking the wooden cup [=soma],
   the manly minded one [=Indra], with a dwelling full of heroes, (will) win the floods, like wise (thoughts?).
5. This Lord of the Chariot is yours, god Leader. Luck (be) Wealth—
   luck (be) for wealth, luck for well-being! Let us conceive praise songs as refreshment; let us conceive praise songs for the gods.

V.51 (405) All Gods

Svastyātreya Ātreya
15 verses: gāyatrī 1–4, uṣṇih 5–10, jagatī or triṣṭubh 11–13, anuṣṭubh 14–15

The last of the All God hymns in Maṇḍala V, this hymn is far too long (fifteen verses) for the position it holds, after a series of five-verse hymns. It is also not unified metrically. It likely originally consisted of separate hymns, verses 1–4, 5–7, 8–10, with 11–15 as a later addition.

Both in content and form, all the segments are simple, predictable, and closely tied to the soma-drinking of various gods, especially those appropriate to the morning soma-pressing. This collection of strictly liturgical verses provides a curious finale to the highly wrought, intellectually challenging, and deeply serious All God hymns in this collection.

1. O Agni, to drink of the pressed (soma), come here with all your helpers,
   with the gods, for the giving of oblations.
2. (All of) you whose insights are truth, whose ordinances are real, come here to the ceremony.
   Drink with the tongue of Agni.
3. You comrade, inspired poet—come here with the inspired poets, the early-traveling
   gods, to drink the soma.
4. Here is the soma, pressed in the cup, poured around in the basin—
   the one dear to Indra, to Vāyu.

5. Vāyu, relishing (them), drive hither to pursue (the oblations), for the giving of oblations.
   Drink of the pressed stalk to your satisfaction.
6. Vāyu and Indra, you have the right to the drinking of these pressed (soma drinks).
   You flawless ones, relish them to your satisfaction.
7. The pressed soma drinks mixed with curds are for Indra and for Vāyu.
   Like rivers to the deep, they go to satisfaction.

8. Jointly with all the gods, jointly with the Aśvins, with Dawn,
   drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.

9. Jointly with Mitra and Varuṇa, jointly with Soma, with Viṣṇu,
drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.
10. Jointly with the Ādityas, with the Vasus, jointly with Indra, with Vāyu,
drive hither, Agni. Take pleasure in the pressed soma, as (you did) at Atri's.

11. Well-being let the Aśvins, let Fortune mete out to us; well-being let the goddess Aditi, let the unassailable ones.
Well-being let lord Pūṣan establish for us; well-being let Heaven and Earth, with kind attention.
12. For well-being we shall call upon Vāyu, on Soma; well-being (let him mete out) who is lord of creation.
On Bṛhaspati with his whole flock (we shall call) for well-being. For well-being let the Ādityas be there for us.
13. Let all the gods be there for us today, for well-being; let Vaiśvānara, Vasu, Agni (be there) for well-being.
Let the gods, the Ṛbhus give aid for (our) well-being. With well-being let Rudra protect us from constraint.
14. Well-being, o Mitra and Varuṇa, well-being, o rich Path.
Well-being for us (let) Indra and Agni—well-being, o Aditi, make for us.
15. With well-being we would follow along our path, like the Sun and the Moon.
May we meet up with one who gives in return, who does not smite, with one who knows.

Maṇḍala V contains the largest collection of Marut hymns in the Ṛgveda, V.52–61, plus V.87. The ten sequential hymns, 52–61, attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, are poetry of the highest order—inventive, exuberant, and beautifully crafted—and they capture both aspects of the Maruts: their social existence as a sort of Männerbund, a group of young, handsome, high-spirited warriors, and their naturalistic existence as personifications of the monsoon/thunderstorm—without losing sight of their divinity and the benefits they provide to men.

V.52 (406) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
17 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6, 16–17

As befits the first hymn in this Marut cycle, the poet Śyāvāśva addresses himself with an exhortation to praise the Maruts in the first pāda of the first verse. He then

describes them in a general fashion and asserts their right to the sacrifice, in a short ring-compositional introduction (vss. 1–5). (For the responsions of verses 1 and 5 as an example of "poetic repair," see Jamison 2006.)

The next section of the hymn (vss. 6–13) depicts the Maruts as the gods of the thunderstorm in a series of vivid images and also fancifully assigns individual names to them (vss. 10–11)—the Maruts are otherwise undifferentiated—ending with another exhortation to the poet to praise them (vs. 13cd). In the last few verses (14–17) ritual honor is given to the Maruts, and they respond with gifts. The last verse (17) resembles a dānastuti, but with the Maruts, rather than humans, as the donors to the poet; they were already identified as "patrons" (*sūrí*) in the two preceding verses (15–16).

The density of imagery throughout is remarkable; we will give just one example, from verse 9. There the Maruts are said to "clothe themselves in wool in the Paruṣṇī River." The "wool" must stand for foam, off-white and fluffy like newly shorn wool. But the river foam is yet another metaphorical substitute for something else, namely clouds, which the Maruts as storm gods would be clothed in—all of this conveyed in an economical half-verse.

1. Śyāvāśva, chant forth boldly—along with the Maruts possessing chants,
   who rejoice in [/cheer on] undisguised fame according to their own
   nature, those worthy of the sacrifice.
2. For they are comrades of steadfast strength—boldly.
   Bold on their drive, by themselves they protect each and every one.
3. They, like streaming bulls, spring across the nights.
   Then the Maruts' might in heaven and earth we ponder.
4. Among the Maruts we would establish your praise and
   sacrifice—boldly—
   who all, through human (life)spans, protect the mortal from harm.
5. The deserving ones possessing good drops [/gifts], men who are not
   half-strength,
   to the Maruts of heaven chant forth—(chant) a sacrifice for those worthy
   of the sacrifice.
6. (Arrived) here with brilliants, here with battle, the lofty men have
   launched their spears.
   Following them (came) the lightning flashes—following the Maruts like
   giggling (girls). The radiance of heaven has arrived by itself.
7. Those who have grown strong as earthlings, who in the broad midspace,
   or in the precinct of the rivers, or in the seat of great heaven—
8. Exalt the Marut troop, of real strength, ingenious.
   The men, streaming, hitch up by themselves for beauty.
9. And they clothe themselves in wool [=foam] in the Paruṣṇī (River)—they
   (like) preening water-birds—
   and with the wheel-rim of their chariots they split the stone with force.

10. "On the Path," "Off the Path," "Within the Path," "Along the Path"—
    with these names they vaunt themselves to me at the bestrewing of the sacrifice.
11. Then they vaunt themselves as "men (come) down"; then they vaunt themselves as "teams";
    then as "those from afar." Their bright forms are worthy to be seen.
12. Chanting in rhythm, seeking water, (like) light-weights they pranced to the wellspring.
    They (seemed indistinct) to me like who knows who, like thieves (concealed), but the helpers (then) came to glitter in my sight.
13. Which lofty ones, whose spears are lightning flashes, are (also) sage poets, ritual adepts—
    to this Marut flock, o seer, do homage and bring it to a halt with song.
14. To the Marut flock, o seer, (approach) with a gift, as a maiden being given (in marriage) (approaches) her ally [=spouse?].
    Or from heaven do you, bold ones, praised with poetic thoughts, speed with strength.
15. Now (a man) paying mind to them, (who approaches) to the gods as if to udders,
    he would keep company with a gift, through (the auspices of) the patrons famed on the course [=Maruts] and by their unguents.
16. Those who proclaimed the cow to me on my seeking (their) lineage, the patrons called Pṛ̥śni their mother,
    then they called their father arrow-possessing Rudra—(they) the skillful ones.
17. Seven upon seven the able ones gave me hundreds, one (hundred) each.
    At the Yamunā (River) a famous thing—I swept up bounty in cattle; swept down bounty in horses.

V.53 (407) Maruts

Śyāvāsva Ātreya
16 verses: kakubh 1, br̥hatī 2, anuṣṭubh 3, puraüṣṇih 4, kakubh 5, satobr̥hatī 6–7, gāyatrī 8, satobr̥hatī 9, kakubh 10–11, gāyatrī 12, satobr̥hatī 13–14, kakubh 15, satobr̥hatī 16

A metrically complex hymn, though there is no reason to consider it a composite. The internal groupings, mostly two-verse units, follow those suggested by Oldenberg (1888: 106–8). The hymn mingles descriptions of and wishes for the Maruts' journey here with descriptions of the storm and the desirable rain the Maruts bring, and indeed the Maruts and the rains are sometimes identified, sometimes modulate from one to the other.

The hymn opens (vss. 1–2), as often, with questions—what is the origin of Maruts and where have they gone? The Maruts themselves answer, indirectly, in verse 3, and demand praise, which is forthcoming in verse 4. The description of a storm follows (vss. 5–7), and the Maruts are urged to come here with their rains (vss. 8–11). The poet returns in verses 12–13 to the question raised at the beginning: to what sacrificer have the Maruts gone? The hope is of course that they have come or will come to us, and the blessings we wish to receive are detailed in the final verses (14–16.)

1. Who knows their birth? Or, who was previously in the graces of the
 Maruts,
 when they yoked their own spotted (female antelopes)?
2. Those mounted on their chariots—who heard (them)? How did
 they drive?
 Toward what good giver, (what) friend, did they flow along (as) friends,
 (as) rains (flow) with their refreshments?

3. They say to me—those who drove hither through the days along with the
 birds, in exuberance,
 the men, unblemished young bloods: "When you see them here,
 praise them!"
4. Who in their unguents, who in their axes have their own radiance—and
 in their garlands, in their brilliants, in their spangles,
 with splendor in their chariots, in their bows.

5. It is following your chariots (when they come) that I take my place for
 delight, you Maruts of lively drops [/lively gifts],
 (I delighting) like the heavens (following the waters) when they come
 with their rain.
6. When the men of good drops [/gifts] have stirred the bucket of heaven
 here for the one doing pious work,
 they send the thunder(storm) surging out along the two world-halves;
 along the wasteplaces come the rains.
7. The rivers, having bored with their gush through the dusky realm, have
 flowed forth like milk-cows,
 like horses that have streamed from the road at their unharnessing, when
 the dappled females turn aside.

8. Drive hither, Maruts, from heaven, from the midspace, and from
 nearby.
 Do not stay away at a distance.
9. Let not the Rasā (River), the Anitabhā, the Kubhā, the Krumu, let not
 the Sindhu bring you to a halt.
 Let not the overflowing Sarayu hem you around. On us alone let your
 favor be.

10. Your troop of chariots, the glittering Marut flock of newer ("hymns" [=thunderclaps])
    do the rains come following after.
11. Your every troop of these (chariots), every swarm, every flock, with good chants
    we would stride after, with poetic thoughts.

12. To what well-born one, who had given an oblation, have they driven forth today
    along this course—the Maruts?
13. —Along which (course) you convey the imperishable granular seed to offspring and descendants.
    Establish for us what we implore you for: generosity through our whole lifetime and good fortune.
14. May we cross over beyond scorners through your blessings, having left behind imperfection and hostilities.
    When it rains, the waters are luck and lifetime; at dawn they are medicine. May we be together with (them/you), o Maruts.

15. Well provided with gods and with heroes in every way will that mortal be
    whom you protect, o men, o Maruts. May we be those (mortals).
16. Praise the benefactors of the praiser on the journey of this (flock). They will take pleasure as cows do in a pasture.
    Invoke them as they go, like old comrades. With song sing (to) those who desire it.

V.54 (408) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 14

One of the most intensely descriptive of the Marut hymns, with shifting images of the violent thunderstorms and welcome rain that they provoke. There is no particular progress or development in the hymn, just the succession of exuberant descriptions. The last three verses (13–15) shift to prayers for the Maruts' gifts and help.

1. Forth—for the Marut troop with its own radiance I will anoint this speech, for (the troop) shaking the mountains,
   for (the troop) with the rhythm of the gharma pot, sacrificing on the back of heaven, of heaven-bright fame—sing (forth) their great manliness.

2. Forth, o Maruts, (go) your forceful, water-seeking, vigor-increasing, horse-yoked, swirling (chariots?).
   They join with lightning; Trita [/the third (heaven)] bellows. The waters resound, swirling in their streambed.
3. With lightning as their might and stones as their missiles, the superior men, the Maruts, turbulent as the wind, shaking the mountains,
   (though) just with a desire to give water, roll hailstones in an instant—(they) with thundering onslaught, violent, overpowering.
4. Through the nights, o Rudras, through the days, you skillful ones, through the midspace, through the dusky realms, you shakers,
   through the fields when you drive, like boats (through the water)—through (all these places) of difficult going, o Maruts, you never suffer harm.
5. This is your heroism, your greatness, o Maruts: it stretches across a long wagon-trek [=measure of distance], like the sun.
   (You are) like antelopes on your journey, with ungraspable brilliance, when you have overrun the mountain that does not give horses [/gives non-horses (=cows?)].
6. When the heaving troop has flashed, o Maruts, you will plunder the tree like a caterpillar, you (ritual) adepts.
   Then in concert you will lead Proper Thinking [/Aramati] to us along an easy way, like the eye (of the sun? of the traveler himself?) (leading) the traveler.
7. He is not conquered, o Maruts, nor is he slain, nor does he fail, nor waver, nor suffer harm,
   nor do his riches give out, nor his help—the seer or the king whom you will "sweeten."
8. The Maruts have teams (of horses) like men who conquer in roving bands; they have (water) skins [=clouds] like hospitable (householders):
   they swell the wellspring. When the strong ones have sounded, they inundate the earth with the stalk of honey.
9. This earth slopes gently for the Maruts; heaven becomes gently sloping for them when they go forth;
   the paths of the midspace slope gently; gently slope the mountains of lively drops.
10. While—you Maruts of equal gravity, you sunlike men, you men of heaven—you become exhilarated when the sun has risen,
    your horses certainly never slacken as they run. In a single day you reach the far limit of this road.
11. On your shoulders spears, on your feet spangles; on your breasts brilliants, o Maruts, on your chariot charms.
    Lightning bolts with the flash of fire in your fists, golden (helmet-)lips stretched out on your heads.

12. The vault whose brilliance is ungraspable for the stranger do you, Maruts, shake for the gleaming fig [=rain].
The communities huddle together when (the Maruts) have grown turbulent. The truth seekers sound an extended cry.
13. May we be the charioteers of the vigorous wealth given by you, discriminating Maruts,
which does not stay away (from us), any more than Tiṣya [=Dog Star] from heaven. By us enjoy (wealth) in thousands, Maruts.
14. You, Maruts, (aid) our wealth consisting of coveted heroes; you aid the seer inspired in his melody.
You (establish) a charger and a prize for Bharata; you establish a king with attentive hearing.
15. For this treasure I beseech you, you of immediate aid, by which we will extend (our control) over men like the sun.
Take pleasure, Maruts, in this speech of mine, by whose enduring power may we pass through a hundred winters.

V.55 (409) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

The first nine of the ten verses in this hymn end with a refrain, "as they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along," which sets the theme of the hymn. Rather than focusing on the thunderstorm and its accompanying rain (mentioned only incidentally in vs. 5), as in the last few Marut hymns, this one primarily concerns their journey through the midspace. The hymn ends with a few verses (9–10) of invitation to the sacrifice and prayers for benefits.

1. The Maruts, worshiped at the forefront of the sacrifice, with glinting spears and brilliants on their breasts, assumed their lofty vigor.
They speed with their horses, swift but easy to control. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
2. You yourselves assumed your power, as you know (how). Loftily, you great ones, widely do you reign [/shine forth].
And through the midspace they measured themselves with their strength. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
3. Born all at once, good in essence, grown all at once, just for splendor the men increased even further,
shining forth like the rays of the sun. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
4. Your greatness is to be emulated, o Maruts; the sight of you is desirable to see like the sighting of the sun.

And establish us in immortality. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.

5. You raise (water) from the sea, o Maruts; you make the rain rain, you overflowing ones.
   Your milk-cows do not wear out, you wondrous ones. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
6. When you have yoked your dappled (mares as) horses to the chariot-poles and you have fastened on your golden cloaks,
   all rival contenders do you disperse, o Maruts. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
7. Not the mountains, not the rivers obstruct you. Where you have set your attention, Maruts, you go just to that.
   And around heaven and earth you drive. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
8. What previously, Maruts, and what now—what is spoken and what is recited,
   of all that you become cognizant. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
9. Be merciful to us, Maruts; do not slay us. To us spread out ample shelter.
   Give study to our praise song, our fellowship. – As they drove in beauty their chariots rolled along.
10. Do you lead us to a better (state), away from dire straits, Maruts, when you are being hymned.
    Enjoy our oblation-giving, you who deserve the sacrifice. May we be lords of riches.

V.56 (410) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
9 verses: bṛhatī, except satobṛhatī 3, 7

Unlike the previous Marut hymns, this one introduces—and indeed begins with—other personnel besides the Maruts. The first word in the hymn is a vocative addressed to the god Agni, and he (or perhaps the poet) is addressed elsewhere in the hymn (vss. 2, 5). The Earth appears in verse 3 as a literally battered woman, a remarkable image, and this female figure anticipates that of Rodasī, frequent companion and consort of the Maruts, in verses 8–9.

The poet repeatedly calls the Maruts to come here: the forms "I call," "we call," and "calls" frame and punctuate the hymn (vss. 1, 2, 5, 8, 9), while the invocation of Agni at the beginning and the description of Agni in verse 7 establish the sacrifice as the goal of their journey. But it is the verses describing the journey itself (especially 3–4) that are the most memorable part of this hymn.

1. O Agni—the vaunting flock, emblazoned with brilliants, with unguents,
   the clans of the Maruts I call down here today, even from the luminous realm of heaven.
2. Just as you [=Agni? poet?] conceive with your heart, in the same way my hopes have gone.
   Those who will come closest to your calls, strengthen them of fearsome appearance.
3. Like (a woman) with a generous (lover), Earth, beaten aside (by your onslaught) [/sexually penetrated], being ecstatic, (seems to) recede from us.
   Like a bear is your strenuous onslaught, o Maruts, fearsome like a headstrong ox.
4. Those who liquefy (the trees) with their strength, at will, like oxen averse to the yoke,
   even the reverberant stone, the mountain, the peak do they shake on their journeys.
5. Rise up(, o Agni? poet?)—now with praises for these who have grown strong together.
   I call the (flock) of the Maruts, best of many, which no one can precede—(call the flock) like a swarm of cows.
6. Yoke your reddish (mares) to your chariot; yoke the chestnuts to your chariots.
   Yoke the two nimble fallow bays to the chariot-pole, to pull—the two best pullers to the chariot-pole, to pull.
7. And *this* reddish racehorse here [=Agni], powerfully noisy, has been set here to be seen.
   Let him not make you too long on your journeys, o Maruts: spur him forth on the chariots.
8. The Marutian chariot, seeking fame, do we now call here,
   on which there stands, bearing great delights, Rodasī in company with the Maruts.
9. This troop of yours, beauty on the chariot, vibrant, inviting admiration do I call here,
   in which the noble, well-portioned (Rodasī) shows her greatness, the generous one in company with the Maruts.

V.57 (411) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7–8

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one introduces other personnel besides the Maruts, though not ones tied specifically to the sacrifice. The hymn begins by

addressing the Maruts by their father's name, "o Rudras," a vocative that returns in verse 7. Their mother Pṛ́śni also figures in the hymn, in verses 2 and 3. The first verse also describes them as "accompanied by Indra" (*índravantaḥ*). It is notable how rarely Indra is mentioned in hymns dedicated to the Maruts, even though they are his sidekicks and supporters from an Indraic point of view. In the whole Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V this is the only appearance of Indra, and it is tellingly phrased: Indra is himself treated as a sidekick, demoted into a possessive adjective: "possessing/accompanied by Indra." It is ordinarily the Maruts who have this grammatically subordinated role: the adjective *marútvant* ("possessing/accompanied by the Maruts") is very common and regularly modifies Indra.

In this hymn, then, the Maruts are defined first by their parentage and their companion. The other elements that define them are their attributes, both physical and mental, lists of which are given in verses 2, 4, 5, and 6, constituting a virtual iconography of the Maruts in verbal form. This listing modulates imperceptibly into the beginning of verse 7, a list of goods possessed by the Maruts that they have give to the singers, a subtle way of moving to the requests of the final verses (7–8).

The vivid description characteristic of Marut hymns is not absent here. See especially verses 2–3, with the Maruts as the storm.

1. O Rudras—accompanied by Indra, of one accord, with your golden
 chariots, come here for good faring.
 Here is a poetic thought from us for you to yearn toward, like the
 wellspring of heaven for a thirsty man seeking water.
2. You with your axes, your spears, your inspired thoughts, with your good
 bows, your arrows, your quivers,
 you possess good horses, good chariots, you whose mother is Pṛ́śni.
 Possessing good weapons, you drive in beauty, Maruts.
3. You shake heaven and the mountains for goods for the pious. The trees
 duck down with fear at your journey.
 You make the earth quake, you whose mother is Pṛ́śni, when, o powerful
 ones, you have yoked the dappled (mares) for beauty.
4. The Maruts—having the wind's turbulence and a cloak of rain, quite
 alike in appearance like twins, well-ornamented,
 having tawny horses and ruddy horses, unblemished, projecting power,
 wide like heaven in their greatness.
5. Possessed of many droplets [/banners], of unguents, of good drops,
 whose appearance is turbulent, whose gifts are not withdrawn,
 noble by birth, with brilliants on their breasts, chant(er)s of heaven, they
 share an immortal name.
6. Spears are on your shoulders, Maruts; might, strength, power placed in
 your arms.
 Manly forces on your heads, weapons on your chariots. All splendor has
 been emblazoned on your bodies.

7. Rich in cows, in horses, in chariots, in good heroes, in gold—(such) largesse you have given to us, Maruts.
   Make good our eulogy, Rudras. Might I have a share in your divine help.
8. – Hail, Maruts, superior men! Be merciful to us—o you of great bounty, immortal, knowing the (immanent) truth,
   hearing the realized (truth) [=poetic formulations], sage poets, youths, belonging to the lofty mountains, loftily growing.

V.58 (412) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Another pleasing Marut hymn with the typical mixture of storm imagery (see esp. vss. 6–7) and portrayal of a wild but beneficial Männerbund. In this latter capacity, the Maruts are seen as the source of various earthly counterparts (vs. 4). Another common theme, the lack of distinction among the various members of the band, is also mentioned (vs. 5). As in V.56.3 a sexual relationship between the Maruts and the Earth is depicted (vs. 7), though without the shock value of the earlier passage.

1. Now will I praise this (flock) full of power, their Marutian flock of newer (hymns [=thunderclaps]),
   those possessing swift horses who drive themselves impetuously and who as self-rulers are masters of the immortal—
2. The turbulent, powerful flock with bangles on their hands, of boisterous commandment, masters of artifice, granting wishes,
   who are joy itself, immeasurable in their greatness. O poet, extol the powerfully generous men.
3. Let the water-conveyors come here to you today, all the Maruts who speed the rain.
   This fire which is kindled here, o Maruts, enjoy it, you sage poets, youths.
4. You beget for the people a take-charge king, fashioned for distinction, you who deserve the sacrifice.
   From you comes the fist-fighter, quick with his arms, from you the one of trusty horses and good heroes, o Maruts.
5. Just like wheel-spokes, there is no last one; like the days they keep arising, not stingy with their mighty powers.
   The sons of Pr̥śni, highest, wildest—the Maruts have equipped themselves with their own poetic thought.
6. When you have driven forth with your dappled mares, your horses, with your chariots with their firm wheel-rims, o Maruts,
   the waters surge; the trees dissolve; let the ruddy bull, the Heaven, roar down.

7. Even the Earth has spread herself at their journey. Like a husband an embryo, they have implanted their own strength (in the earth).
   Certainly they have yoked the winds as horses to their yoke-pole; they have made their own sweat into rain—the Rudras.
8. – Hail, Maruts, superior men! Be merciful to us—o you of great bounty, immortal, knowing the (immanent) truth,
   hearing the realized (truth) [=poetic formulations], sage poets, youths, belonging to the lofty mountains, loftily growing.

V.59 (413) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8

This hymn is constructed around a series of similes and metaphors, some of which (see esp. 3a) push the boundaries of similarity and require a mental leap from the audience, while in others (e.g., 3d) the near identity between the two entities compared renders the simile-marking almost redundant. The hymn's subject, as usual, is the power of the Maruts on their travels, power manifested both as the storm and as a warriors' onslaught. The puzzles in this hymn begin with its opening: no entirely satisfactory referent for the "scout" or "spy" of 1a has been found, though many have been suggested.

1. Your scout has stridden forth, to give good faring. I will chant to heaven. I proffer my truth [=hymn] to the earth.
   They sprinkle the horses, passing through the dusky realm. They let their own radiance slacken with floods (of rain).
2. In fear of their onslaught the Earth trembles. Like a loaded boat she streams, going a wayward course.
   They who, visible from afar, are conspicuous on their travels, the men have taken their places amid the great rite of distribution.
3. (Your) horn, like (those) of cows, stands tallest for splendor; (your) eye is like the sun in his surging through the dusky realm.
   Like steeds of good quality, you are pleasing. Like young bloods, you are conspicuous for splendor, o men.
4. Who can reach up to the great things of you great ones? Who to your poetic skills, Maruts, who to your manly deeds?
   You set the earth to quivering like a dustmote, when you press forward, to give good faring.
5. Like reddish horses [=flames of fire] they are of the same lineage, like champions in the vanguard, they have fought in advance.
   Like very strong young bloods, the men have grown strong. They confound the eye of the sun with their rains.

6. They, bursting forth with no oldest one, no youngest, no middle, have grown forth in their greatness.
   Noble by birth, having Pṛśni as mother, young bloods of heaven—come here to us.
7. They who, like birds in formation, have flown with their strength to the ends of heaven from (heaven's) lofty back—
   their horses, as both (races [=human and divine]) know, have stirred forth the spurting (waters) of the mountain.
8. Let heaven bellow, let Aditi (come) to pursue our (oblations). Let the dawns, bright with drops, take their places together.
   These have stirred the heavenly bucket hither—o seer—the Maruts, (sons) of Rudra, being hymned.

V.60 (414) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7–8

Like V.56, this hymn begins with an invocation of Agni, the ritual fire, who is also conspicuously addressed along with the Maruts in each of the last three verses (6–8). The prominence of Agni identifies the Maruts' journey to and participation in the sacrifice as the goal of the hymn. Their journey itself provokes the usual cosmic reactions—fear and trembling (vss. 2–3)—and the dazzling beauty of the Maruts also receives its usual expression (vs. 4). Verse 5 provides an almost domestic picture of their parentage. Notable also is the dicing imagery in verse 1.

1. I solemnly invoke helpful Agni with reverences. Seated in front, he will pull out a perfect ("hand" of dice) for us.
   I press forward as if with chariots seeking prizes. With respectful circumambulation (of Agni) might I bring to fulfillment the praise of the Maruts.
2. Those who have mounted on the famed dappled mares, on the well-naved chariots—the Rudras, the Maruts—
   even the trees duck down with fear of you, powerful ones. Even the earth trembles, even the mountain.
3. Even the mountain, grown great, has fear; even the back of heaven trembles at your roar.
   When you are at play, o Maruts, equipped with spears, you run toward a single goal like the waters.
4. Just like wooers coming from wealth, with golden (ornaments) they have emblazoned their bodies through their own powers.
   For splendor the very splendid ones, powerful on their chariots, all together have furnished themselves marks of greatness on their bodies.

5. Without an oldest one, without a youngest, these brothers have grown strong together for good fortune.
   Their father (was) the youth, the skillful Rudra, and Pṛśni their good-milking (mother); day-bright (are the days) for the Maruts.
6. If you are in the highest heaven, o Maruts, or in the middle one, or if you are in the lowest one, you of good fortune,
   from there, o Rudras, or you now, o Agni, be cognizant of this oblation of ours, when we will perform sacrifice.
7. O Maruts, affording all possessions, and Agni too—when you (Maruts) drive yourselves from higher heaven along (its) backs,
   exulting, boisterous—(all) you who have care for the stranger, establish a thing of value for the sacrificer who presses soma.
8. O Agni, with the Maruts, the versifiers in their beauty, drink the soma, you exulting along with those who are splendor in a flock,
   along with the pure Āyus who set all in motion, o Vaiśvānara, along with your age-old beacon.

V.61 (415) Maruts

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
19 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 5 and satobṛhatī 9

With its nineteen verses, this hymn is out of place by the normal rules of arrangement of the saṃhitā. It also falls into several sections on thematic grounds (vss. 1–4, 5–10, 11–16, 17–19). However, at least the first half (1–10) displays the cleverness and sly humor of Śyāvāśva, who names himself directly in verse 5 and punningly in verse 9, and perhaps represents a jeu d'esprit of the poet, appended to the more solemn Marut hymns that precede it. Note that Śyāvāśva names himself only in the first of those hymns (V.52.1) and in this last one.

The Maruts are the clear subject of verses 1–4 and 11–16, and each of these sections is followed by a dānastuti, or verses culminating in a dānastuti: 10 and 17–19. We therefore suggest that we are dealing here with two originally separate hymns, 1–10 and 11–19, and that the first at least bears clear marks of Śyāvāśva's authorship.

Since the second of these is less interesting than the first, we will discuss it first here. The six verses (11–16) treating the Maruts are fairly conventional. Verse 17 serves as a transition to the dānastuti, addressed, oddly, to the goddess Night, who is urged to carry the poet's hymns to his patron, called Dārbhya here, and Rathavīti in the following two verses. Both parts of the latter name are punned upon: *ratha* "chariot" in verse 17 ("like a charioteer"), *-vīti* "pursuit" in verse 18 in the verb form (*ápa*) *veti* "go off track," and he is praised for his generosity in general terms (19).

The first hymn is a much less staid affair. The four opening verses to the Maruts begin with questions about the Maruts and then in increasing detail about their

horses and horse-tackle. And in verses 2c and 3b the Maruts are depicted as riding horseback (one of the very few pieces of evidence for this activity in the R̥gveda); in verse 2 the reference is unremarkable, but in verse 3 the men's posture on the horse reminds the poet of women spreading their thighs in sex (or possibly childbirth, though this seems less likely). From this point on the hymn takes a sexually suggestive turn. In verse 4 the Maruts are sent off with "lucky women," and we move abruptly into the second section of the hymn.

That section ends with a real dānastuti verse (10) in praise of a patron named Vaidadaśvi. We might expect the four preceding verses (5–9) to form part of the dānastuti as well, and there are prominent dānastuti-like elements in them, but they also subvert the dānastuti model or provide a counter model—not least because they concern a woman and profess the unorthodox opinion that women can be superior to men. Verse 5 introduces an unidentified woman who "gains" the sorts of things poets usually receive in dānastutis, using the root for "gain" (*san*) that is standard in such contexts. (The notion that a woman would be in such a position is so unusual that most translators simply translate the word as if it means "give"—though a woman who *gives* livestock is no more standard a figure than one who *gains* it.) From the second half of the verse it is clear that she must be the favored consort (perhaps even the "Favorite Wife" of later Vedic ritual) of Śyāvāśva's patron. The poet then seems to reflect (vss. 6–8) on the qualities of women in general, in contrast to men, allowing that some women may actually be better than men, especially men of bad character—and among those especially a stingy man (vss. 6, 8), who doesn't deserve to be called a man except in the technical matter of blood money (vs. 8). The tone in these verses is colloquial and conversational. After this seeming digression, with the subtle hint to his patron about the perils of stinginess, we return in verse 9 to a flesh-and-blood woman, who is working her wiles on the poet, who calls himself "Dusky" (*śyāva*). The verse is an elaborate pun: on the one hand she is narrating the course of a race, and the "two chestnuts" in the second half of the verse can be two horses given to the poet, "straining forward" to win. But the tone is very intimate; the "course" may be the progress of sexual intercourse between the girl and the poet, and the second half of the verse, using the same verb (*ví* √*yam* "spread apart") as in the first sexually suggestive passage in verse 4, can describe the "spreading apart" of two female body parts. The girl in verse 9 thus appears to be part of the "gift" that Śyāvāśva received for his poem, and the complex set of double meanings in this verse are certainly a worthy "praise of this gift." Is the girl in this verse the same as the one in verse 5? Śyāvāśva seems to imply this, but we will never know for sure.

1. Who are you, men, the fairest ones, who one by one have driven here
   from the farthest distance?
2. Where are your horses, where your reins? How have you been able? How
   have you driven here?
   (Where is) the seat on their back, the bridle at their nostrils?

3. (Where) the whip on their haunch? The men have spread apart their thighs (on horseback),
   like wives at the making of sons.
4. Go forth, heroes, you young bloods with lucky women,
   so that you will be hot as fire.

5. She gains livestock in horses and cows and (livestock) consisting of a hundred sheep—
   the one who keeps plumping up her arm as a pillow for the hero praised by Śyāvāśva.
6. Now a woman can be more reliable, better than a man
   if he's estranged from the gods, ungenerous—
7. While she pays attention to a famished man, or to a thirsting one, or to one who has desires [/lust],
   and sets her own mind upon the gods.
8. And some other guy, a niggard not deserving praise, (may be) called a "man,"
   but he is only equivalent (to a man) in the matter of wergeld.
9. But a young woman, having beguiled (me), whispered the course to me, "Dusky" [=Śyāvāśva], face to face.
   The two chestnuts spread apart [/strained forward] for the much-rewarded one, for the inspired poet of lasting glory—
10. Whoever will give me a hundred milk-cows as Vaidadaśvi (did),
    (he is) like a victor in his munificence.

11. (The Maruts), who drive themselves with their swift horses, drinking the exhilarating honey,
    here they have acquired their fame.
12. With whose splendor they flash through the two world-halves on their chariots, like the bright ornament in heaven above.
13. This youthful Marutian flock with its glittering chariot is not to be scorned;
    charging to beauty it is unrepulsable.
14. Who now knows about them, where the shakers are reaching elation,
    those born of truth, unblemished?
15. You, who seek admiration, are those who lead the mortal forth with an insight right to the point,
    are those who listen to his invocations on your journey.
16. You who care for the stranger—roll here to us desirable, greatly shimmering goods,
    you who deserve the sacrifice.

17. This praise of mine, o Night, carry off to Dārbhya,
    (my) hymns (carry away) like a charioteer, o goddess.

18. And then speak for me thus to Rathavīti who has pressed the soma:
    "My desire does not go off track."
19. This Rathavīti dwells in peace, a bounteous patron throughout the
    cow-rich (clans) [/along the Gomatī River],
    set back among the mountains.

V.62 (416) Mitra and Varuṇa

Śrutavid Ātreya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn calls on Mitra and Varuṇa for rain, as 3cd makes clear. Their ability to send the rain is connected with their kingship, and the poet suggests that connection in several images. The gods' throne sits "within the libations" (vss. 5, 6), which not only are the oblations made to them but also signify the rainwater. The banner that increases through their commandment (vs. 5) is the banner "of the ruler" (cf. V.69.1), and here the rain is the emblem of their kingship. Their rule is strong, supported by a thousand pillars (vs. 6), but the pillar of their throne is also the lightning (vs. 7ab) that accompanies the rain, and its foundation is in land that yields plants (vs. 7c).

Framing the rain, which is the subject of verses 2–7, is the sun (vss. 1, 8). The first verse remains mysterious. The first hemistich places Mitra and Varuṇa's "enduring truth" in the night sky or in any case, in that place where "they," most likely the gods generally, unhitch Sūrya's horses to let them pasture during the night. Yet even before dawn the poet's vision allows him to see "that One," the sun, and together with the sun, the hidden truth of the two gods. The sun may also be the "single felly" mentioned in 2d, and if so, the verse looks forward the appearance of the sun after the rain. After the invocations to the gods for rain, the sun returns to the poem once again, this time visible to all at dawn and closely associated with the golden throne of Mitra and Varuṇa.

1. Your enduring truth is hidden by truth, there where they unhitch the
   horses of the sun.
   Ten times a hundred [=rays of the sun?] stand together: I saw that One,
   the most splendid of the lovely forms of the gods.
2. That is surely your greatness, Mitra and Varuṇa: while standing at rest,
   they have given milk throughout the days.
   You two swell all the pasture's streams of milk. The single felly has
   turned here after you two.
3. You upheld the earth and heaven, o you two kings, Mitra and Varuṇa, by
   your great powers.
   Make the plants grow! Swell the cows! Send the rain gushing down, o
   you of lively waters!

4. Let the horses in good harness convey you here. Let them with guided reins come near to this place.
   A cloak of ghee whirls along after you. From of old, rivers flow near.
5. Guarding (the commandment) that increases your famed, broad banner, as if guarding the ritual grass with a yajus-recitation,
   you sit upon the throne amid the libations, o Mitra and Varuṇa of firm skill, receiving homage.
6. You are the two far-protectors with unbloodied hands for him who performs rituals well, whom you two safeguard, Varuṇa, amid the libations.
   Never becoming angry, you two kings together bear a thousand-pillared rule.
7. Metal cloaked in gold, its [=the throne's] pillar flashes in heaven like a horsewhip,
   anchored in the good or fruitful land. We would win honey upon your throne.
8. You two mount the throne possessing golden color at the break of dawn, (the throne) possessing a metal pillar at the rising of the sun,
   o Mitra and Varuṇa. From there you observe guiltlessness and guilt.
9. Your very stout, unbroken protection, which is not to be pierced, o you herdsmen of the living world, bringing good waters—
   with that help us, Mitra and Varuṇa. Seeking to win, may we be victorious.

V.63 (417) Mitra and Varuṇa

Arcanānas Ātreya
7 verses: jagatī

Like the previous hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa, this hymn is also a plea for monsoon rains. It gives a vivid picture of the monsoons with their thunder and lightning (vss. 5, 6) and the coming of the rain (esp. vss. 1, 4). The poet uses sound repetition, perhaps in imitation of echoing thunder or recurring lightning or perhaps simply as a demonstration of his poetic ability: 2d . . . *-vī ví caranti* . . . , 3b . . . *vícarṣanī*, 3c *citrébhir* . . . , 4b *carati citrám* . . . , 5c . . . *citrā́ ví caranti* . . . , 6b . . . *citrā́m vadati tvíṣī-* . . . , and 7d . . . *-vi cítryam*. . . . Also across 3ab *samrā́jā ugrā́ vr̥ṣabhā́ divás pátī, pr̥thivyā́ mitrā́váruṇā vícarṣaṇī*, the two lines have exactly the same metrical structure and repeated vowels in the same syllables.

The hymn several times refers to the *māyā́*, the "cunning" of Mitra and Varuṇa (vss. 3, 4, 6, 7), which in its first and last attestations is described as the "cunning of a lord (*ásura*)" (vss. 3, 7), thus connecting Mitra and Varuṇa's ability to control the rain by their cunning with their kingship. They are likewise twice called "sovereign

kings" (*samrā́j*) (vss. 2, 3). The prefix *sám-* "together," signifying their unifying rule, contrasts with the repeated prefix *ví-* "apart," which indicates the diverse things over which they hold sovereignty. This theme is announced in 2ab, where they are called *samrā́jau* over the world *vidáthe* "in its division."

Also translated and discussed in Brereton (1981: 104–6).

1. O herdsmen of the truth, o you whose nature holds true, you two stand upon your chariot in the most distant heaven.
   For him whom you two help here, Mitra and Varuṇa, the rain swells rich in honey from heaven.
2. As sovereign kings, you two of sunlike appearance rule over this living world in its division, o Mitra and Varuṇa.
   We implore the gift that is rain, that is immortality. Thunder ranges through Heaven and Earth.
3. Sovereign kings, powerful bulls, and lords of heaven and of earth, Mitra and Varuṇa, who know no boundaries—
   you two approach the roar with shimmering clouds. You make heaven rain by the cunning of a lord.
4. Mitra and Varuṇa, your cunning rests upon heaven. The sun, your light, moves as a shimmering weapon.
   You hide it in heaven by cloud and by rain. O Parjanya, the honeyed drops are arising.
5. The Maruts harness their easy-running chariot for beauty, like a champion on cattle raids, o Mitra and Varuṇa.
   Thunder ranges through the shimmering air. O sovereign kings, sprinkle us with milk from heaven.
6. O Mitra and Varuṇa, Parjanya speaks his refreshment-bringing word, shimmering and shattering.
   The Maruts clothe themselves in clouds by your cunning. Make heaven rain, ruddy and spotless.
7. According to your nature, o Mitra and Varuṇa who perceive inspired words, you two guard your commandments by the cunning of a lord.
   By truth you rule over the whole living world. You place the sun here in heaven as your shimmering chariot.

V.64 (418) Mitra and Varuṇa

Arcanānas Ātreya
7 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 7

As often, the central verse of the hymn is its most enigmatic. The poet condenses this verse so that a number of interpretations are possible, all of them applicable to

the situation. The word *upamá*, here translated "closest," might also mean "best." Indeed, most translators choose the latter interpretation, but in the verses leading up to this one, the poet constantly emphasizes the intimacy of Mitra and Varuṇa: In their arms they gather "the realm of solar glory" (vs. 1), which is likely both the celestial realm and the realm of the sacrifice. They stretch forth their arms to the sacrificers, who call on their affection (vs. 2). The sacrificers are accompanied by the protection of Mitra, "who never does injury" (vs. 3). In verse 4 the poet brings something close to the gods, although he does not state clearly what it is. In the more obvious reading it might be the sacrificial offerings and the sacrificial recitations. But it might also be gifts to the priests, or the inhabitants in the patrons' dwellings, or the talent and learning that the priests bring to the ritual performance. In short, it might be everything that is part of the sacrifice or even part of the lives of the patrons and priests.

In the final verses this theme of the closeness of Mitra and Varuṇa to the sacrificers is expressed through a number of different strategies. The simile in 7cd is particularly striking. It turns on two homophonous present stems *dhāva*, one of which means "run" and the other "rinse, cleanse," with the shift from one to the other signaled by the change from "feet" to "hands." This word play maintains the sense of closeness of the sacrificers and the gods, since "cleanse" refers to a typical priestly action, while "run" is the desired action of the gods. That theme continues in verses 4 and 5, in which the poet invites Varuṇa and Mitra to the dwelling of generous patrons, which is also the gods' "seat" or "abode" (vs. 5). And verse 6a begins *yuvám̐ naḥ* "you two for us," setting the 2nd- and 1st-person pronouns next to one another.

1. With our verse we summon for you all Mitra and Varuṇa, who cares for the stranger,
   who, like corrals, have encompassed the realm of solar glory in their two arms.
2. Let these two arms stretch forth with kind attention to him who chants,
   for again and again, in all places of the earth, I call on your benevolent affection.
3. That I might now reach the way, I would travel by the path of Mitra.
   They go together with the protection of him [=Mitra] who is dear, who never does injury.
4. Mitra and Varuṇa, with my verse I would set closest to you two
   what is in the dwelling of generous patrons and what serves praise singers to contend over.
5. O Mitra, (you) and Varuṇa—(come) here for us with your bright lights, here into your seat,
   into their own dwelling, (that) of the generous patrons, for your partners to grow strong.
6. For us, among whom you two maintain your dominion (here) and aloft, o Varuṇa—

for us make wide space to win the prize for the sake of wealth and well-being.

7. While (Dawn) with her shining cattle is breaking at the (sacrifice) under divine dominion,
   do you two worthy of the sacrifice run to me here by foot, as if (cleansing by hand) soma pressed by priests with skilled hands, o you two superior men, as you maintain Arcanānas.

V.65 (419) Mitra and Varuṇa

Rātahavya Ātreya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6

The poet begins by invoking himself as the "perceptive" poet (vss. 1–2), who then speaks on behalf of the sacrificers (vs. 3). The basic theme of the hymn is the request that Mitra and Varuṇa help create a peaceful dwelling place that is broad and secure for people and animals during the period that the tribe is settled. While the poet addresses both Mitra and Varuṇa, his principal address is to Mitra: Mitra alone is mentioned in verse 4, in verse 5 Varuṇa appears only as the complement of Mitra, and in verse 6 Varuṇa's presence is merely implied in the dual personal pronoun. Mitra is the god of alliances, and the reason for the focus on Mitra here is that the poet particularly wants people to occupy their proper places (vs. 6) by honoring their agreements with one another. The verb √*yat* "arrange" in this verse is elsewhere associated with the action of Mitra, who governs peoples through the pacts and alliances made among them.

The word *mitrá* can refer not only to the god Mitra but also to a *mitrá*, an ally, and the poet makes use of this ambiguity in verse 4. The god Mitra wins a dwelling free from threat or constraint through the power of divinely sanctioned alliances, and therefore one who is a true ally, who embodies the principles of the god of alliances, also wins such a dwelling. The connection between the god Mitra and the human ally is further suggested by verse 3, in which Mitra and Varuṇa are invoked to give out the prizes of victory, and verse 4, in which the person in a parallel fashion distributes offerings.

1. He who is perceptive has strong resolve. Let him speak among the gods for us—
   he whose songs beautiful Varuṇa or Mitra longs for.
2. Since these two are kings of most glorious luster and farthest fame,
   they are lords of the settlement, who grow through the truth and possess the truth, among every people.
3. Imploring you for help, I address you two ancient ones together:
   "Through your good perception, with your good horses, (race) toward the prizes of victory to give them out."

4. Mitra [/an ally] then wins a broad way for peaceful dwelling, even out of narrow straits,
   since the favor of triumphant Mitra belongs to him who distributes offerings.
5. Blameless, helped by you, we would be completely within the most extensive help
   of Mitra, whose complement is Varuṇa.
6. The two of you, o Mitra, arrange this people and lead them together.
   Do not overlook the generous one nor us seers. Give us wide space under your protection.

V.66 (420) Mitra and Varuṇa

Rātahavya Ātreya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn shows similarities to the preceding hymn, attributed to the same poet. Note especially the first line, whose beginning, *ā́ cikitāna sukrátū* "Here are the two of strong resolve, o perceptive mortal," uses similar lexical elements as 65.1a *yáś cikéta sá sukrátuḥ* "He who is perceptive has strong resolve." In V.65 the poet singles out Mitra, especially in the last three verses of the hymn. Here the poet addresses Varuṇa alone in the first verse and Mitra alone in the last. This strategy has the effect of defining a beginning and ending to the hymn, but there are also thematic reasons for this distribution of divine names as well. Verse 1 mentions the "truth" (*ṛtá*), which is particularly associated with Varuṇa, who presides over the truth, and in verse 6 the poet hopes that his people will take their places (*yátemahi*) under the gods' protection. The root √*yat* "arrange," here in the middle voice in the sense of "take one's place," is characteristically associated with Mitra's task of "arranging" peoples according to the alliances among them, as was noted in the introduction to V.65.

Renou characterizes this hymn as a eulogy of poetic power and an *ṛtá,* and he is right that these are central concerns of the poet. The power of the hymn is indirectly suggested in verses 1–2. In verse 1 the hymn is "set in place" (*dadhītá*) in the ritual, and this act finds a social and cosmological echo in the next verse, where the rule of Mitra and Varuṇa "is set in place" (*dhāyi*) in the way that the sun is set in place. That is to say, in terms of the verse sequence of the poem, the hymn appears in the ritual and then the rule of the gods appears. In verses 3–4 there is an extended description of the poet's work that implicitly compares it to a raid. As they often are in the Ṛgveda, the "chariots" sought by the poet (vs. 4) may be hymns or even sacrifices that journey to the gods. In verse 5 the gods perceive the hymn of the poet, brought to them by the "beacon of the peoples." While interpreters have variously

identified this beacon, we believe that it is most likely Agni (cf. V.11.2), who transports hymns and offerings to the gods.

One of the poet's strategies that makes this hymn interesting but difficult to interpret is his use of indeterminate ellipsis (cf. vss. 1, 2, 3) and obscure reference (esp. vs. 5). Verses 5–6 are the most intriguing example, because they form the climax of the hymn. In 5ab the poet dramatically declares that he will enunciate the "lofty truth," but as is often the case, this lofty truth that he expresses in 5cd is an abstruse one. By the double reference of *yā́mabhiḥ* to a poet's entreaties and to river courses, the words of the poet are compared to flowing streams. These streams flow over Heaven and Earth, which expand for the poet in response. In this reading of the hemistich, the masculine dual *jrayasānaú* "who extend" would be completed by *dyā́vā* or the like, "Heaven and Earth." This is suggested by the vocative *pr̥thivi* in 5a, echoed by *pr̥thú* in c, for *dyā́vā* regularly appears alongside the nominative *pr̥thivī́*, as in I.159.1, II.12.13, II.41.20, VI.11.1, VII.69.1, and VIII.72.9. But the poet's words carrying their entreaties also flow beyond to Mitra and Varuṇa, who likewise become even greater through them. Verse 6 then is a phalaśruti, a "declaration of benefit," expressing the expectation of the poet and his people that they will live safely under the rule of Mitra and Varuṇa.

1. O perceptive mortal, here are the two gods of strong resolve who care for the stranger.
   It [=the hymn] should be set in place for Varuṇa, whose garment is the truth, for his great pleasure.
2. Because these two together have achieved lordly dominion that is not overturned,
   so then, like the lovely sun, (their dominion) over the sons of Manu has been set in place like their commandments.
3. (We search for) you two in our quest for chariots (and for) a broad pasture-land for them.
   With our praise songs we will boldly conceive the good praise of him by whom the oblation is given,
4. Because then, you undeceivable ones, by the fortresses of your skill
   you perceive our verbal craft through the beacon of the peoples [=Agni], o you of purified skill.
5. O Earth, this is their lofty truth in the seers' quest for fame:
   by (the seers') entreaties they [=poetic streams] flow beyond the two [=Heaven and Earth], who rightly extend widely,
6. So that—o Mitra, o you two quick-eyed ones—we and our patrons
   would take our places within your very extensive, much-protecting sovereignty.

V.67 (421) Mitra and Varuṇa

Yajata Ātreya
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn emphasizes the multiplicity of the Ādityas, which the hymn connects with their presence in multiple places and their lordship among different peoples (vss. 2, 4). It invokes the Ādityas in the first verse and then Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman; in verse 2 just Varuṇa and Mitra, and then in verse 3 Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman once again. The climax comes in the last verse, which suggests that all the forms of the Ādityas culminate in Mitra or Varuṇa—or, rather, in the two of them together. We offer this interpretation tentatively since the key lines are 5ab. As the parenthetical insertions in our translation indicate, it is not clear precisely how these lines should be construed.

1. Yes indeed! It is just so, o god: the appointed place is worthy of the sacrifice and lofty, o Ādityas,
   o Varuṇa and Mitra, o Aryaman. You two have achieved the highest lordship.
2. O Varuṇa and Mitra, when you two take your seat upon the golden womb,
   as maintainers of the separate peoples, offer your favor, o you caring for the stranger.
3. Because all of them—Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman—know all things,
   they follow their commandments like tracks. They protect the mortal from harm.
4. For they are real, touching the truth and truth-possessing among every people;
   they are those leading well, giving good drops [/gifts], and making a wide space even from narrow straits.
5. Now which of you two, (which) of (all your) forms, o Mitra—or (is it) Varuṇa?—is not praised?
   Thus our thought hastens to you two; from the Atris a thought hastens.

V.68 (422) Mitra and Varuṇa

Yajata Ātreya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The poet is intent on praising the expanse of Mitra and Varuṇa's power: he says they are of "great dominion" (vs. 1) and are "proclaimed among the gods" (vs. 2). Then combining their power among both gods and humans, he calls them masters over "earthly and heavenly" wealth and possessing "dominion among the gods" (vs. 3). The climax and purpose of this praise of their power on earth and in heaven is

finally expressed in the last verse: they are lords of rains, which come from heaven to earth.

1. Sing forth to Mitra and to Varuṇa with your inspiration and song.
   O you two of great dominion, lofty is our truth.
2. Sovereign kings, whose womb is covered with ghee, both Mitra
   and Varuṇa
   are gods proclaimed among the gods.
3. Show us your mastery over great wealth, earthly and heavenly.
   Great is your dominion among the gods.
4. Serving the truth by the truth, they two have attained vigorous skill.
   Undeceiving, the two gods grow strong.
5. Bringing the heavens to rain and the waters to streaming, the two lords
   of refreshments, bringing gifts,
   have attained their lofty throne.

V.69 (423) Mitra and Varuṇa

Urucakri Ātreya
4 verses: triṣṭubh

In the last half of the hymn the poet connects Mitra and Varuṇa to their mother Aditi, the goddess who embodies guiltlessness. He invokes her for wealth, a continuing lineage, good fortune, and health (vs. 3). It is not clear, however, whether it is she whom the poet invokes in 3d or whether it is the two gods. The object is suppressed perhaps to create intentional ambiguity, since the gift that comes from guiltlessness is also the gift from Mitra and Varuṇa. The connection between Aditi, Mitra, and Varuṇa is confirmed in the last verse, which call them Ādityas, "sons of Aditi."

1. The three realms of light and the three heavens, the three airy spaces do
   you two uphold, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   strengthening the emblem of your lordship, protecting your unaging
   commandment.
2. O Varuṇa and Mitra, your milk-cows are filled with refreshments. Your
   rivers give honey-rich milk.
   Three brilliant bulls [=fires?] stand far and wide, the semen-givers of the
   three holy places.
3. In the early morning, at midday, and at the rising of the sun, again and
   again I call upon the goddess Aditi
   for wealth in its entirety, o Mitra and Varuṇa. I invoke (her) for kith and
   kin, for luck and life.

4. (You) two heavenly Ādityas, who are the upholders of the earthly space and the realm of light—
   o Mitra and Varuṇa, the immortal gods do not violate your enduring commandments.

V.70 (424) Mitra and Varuṇa

Urucakri Ātreya
4 verses: gāyatrī

The most interesting question about this hymn is why Mitra and Varuṇa are here called Rudras, and the most interesting verse is the mysterious final one. Rudra is a healer but also a terrifying archer, and the purpose of the poet may be to make sure that the vengeance of Mitra and Varuṇa, which is like the fury of Rudra, be turned against his enemies. Mitra and Varuṇa should protect and rescue him and direct their anger toward the Dasyus, not toward him (vs. 3).

This observation may help us understand the last verse, although its meaning remains uncertain. As also in IV.3.13, we read the beginning of pāda a as *mā́ akásya*, rather than *mā́ kásya* with the Padapāṭha and most other interpreters. The fear expressed in ab, then, is that the poet will be destroyed and thereby become a nonentity. This fear is not only for the present, but also for the future. In pāda c the poet asks that after death he not become a nobody, a nonentity, but that in heaven his remains form a new body and that on earth his life continue in his lineage.

1. Since now there is help from you two, even in (its full) quantity and breadth,
   I have won the favor of you two, o Varuṇa and Mitra.
2. We would attain you two together, o you without deception, and your refreshment for our nurture.
   We would be such ones, o you two Rudras.
3. Protect us, Rudras, by your protections, and rescue us, since you are good rescuers.
   We in our own persons would overcome the Dasyus.
4. O you of undeceived will, may we in our own persons not endure (becoming) the specter of a nobody,
   neither in our remains nor in our lineage.

V.71 (425) Mitra and Varuṇa

Bāhuvr̥kta Ātreya
3 verses: gāyatrī

This and the following hymn are attributed to the same poet, and indeed have similar purposes and deploy similar techniques. Both hymns are straightforward

invitations to Mitra and Varuṇa to come to the rite and to drink the soma. In V.71 the poet emphasizes his invocation to the two gods by repeating their names at the beginning of pāda b of each verse. The repetition is underlined by the fact that the names are followed in each case by just a single word completing the line, a word that has a different grammatical form and syntactic function in each verse.

1. Come here to us with might, o you caring for the stranger, o Varuṇa
      and Mitra,
   to this cherished rite.
2. Because you are kings of all, being masters, o attentive ones, o Varuṇa
      and Mitra,
   make our insights swell.
3. Come here toward the pressing of the pious man, o Varuṇa and Mitra,
   to drink of this soma.

V.72 (426) Mitra and Varuṇa

Bāhuvr̥kta Ātreya
3 verses: uṣṇih

In this hymn, which continues the themes and techniques of the preceding hymn, the poet repeats a refrain that asks the gods to be present and to receive the soma offerings. In verse 2 of this hymn he does not mention the names of the gods, as he does in the first and third verses, but rather begins pāda a with *vraténa* "by your commandment" and ends pāda b with *yātayájjanā* "who arrange the peoples." The word *vratá* is particularly associated with Varuṇa, both conceptually and etymologically, and √*yat* "arrange" describes the function of Mitra. Instead of pairing the two names, the poet has created a chiasmic pairing of the most characteristic functions of the gods.

1. Like Atri, we pour an offering to Mitra and Varuṇa with our songs.
   – Sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.
2. By your commandment, you are those two who give peaceful dwellings
      that endure, who arrange the peoples according to your foundation.
   – Sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.
3. Mitra and Varuṇa take pleasure in our sacrifice to their liking.
   – Let them sit down upon the ritual grass to drink the soma.

V.73 (427) Aśvins

Paura Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh

The central theme of the hymn is the journey of the Aśvins: their journey that encompasses the whole world and their journey to the poet's sacrifice. Geldner

describes this hymn as strophic, consisting of five paired verses; this structure expresses the thematic division of the hymn.

Verses 1–2 describe the Aśvins as moving somewhere, possibly near or possibly far, but in any case the poet invites them to travel here to his sacrifice. Since the poet has begun with a reference to journeys of the Aśvins, it is not surprising that he then turns to a description of their wonderful chariot. According to the interpretation we offer here, one wheel of that chariot is the sacrificial fire (vs. 3). Behind this symbolism is likely the recurrent representation of the sacrifice as a chariot, particularly as the Aśvins' chariot. The other wheel of their chariot is the sun (vs. 4). Running on these two wheels the Aśvins both range over the whole world and are present at the sacrifice.

Verses 5–6 are connected by the theme of heat, and as in the case of the two wheels, one form of heat is cosmic, the other form ritual. In verse 5 Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, mounts the chariot of the Aśvins, which drives onward ahead of the rising, burning sun. In verse 6 what is called *gharmá* "hot" is either the Pravargya pot, in which the milk for the Aśvins is heated, or the hot milk itself. While verse 5 refers primarily to the sun and verse 6 to the Pravargya rite, there is also a secondary, implied reference to the ritual in verse 5 and to the sun in verse 6. The motif of Sūryā's mounting the Aśvins' chariot is always a courtship or wedding image. Here in verse 5 she may be brought as bride to Soma (cf. X.85), who is, of course, at the center of the rite.

Because the interpretation of 8ab is uncertain, the connection between verses 7–8 is less clear than in the other pairs of verses. In verse 7 the horse thunders as he brings the Aśvins to the rite at the invitation of Atri, who may be not the Atri of legend but his present or future descendant. In verse 8ab the subject is suppressed, and various interpreters have suggested various possibilities: the Aśvins' honeyed whip (Geldner), the hymn (Sāyaṇa, Geldner, cf. VIII.6.43), a cow (Pirart 2001: 243–44, cf. II.16.8). It could even be the "thundering" of the lead horse from the previous verse. We have left the identification unclear, although a reference to the hymn (*dhī́*) in one way or another appears to us likely. The balance between the Aśvins' presence in the cosmos and in the rite is repeated in 8cd, which describes the Aśvins' journey across the seas and the ritual offerings made to them.

The concluding verses then restate the theme of the Aśvins' journey throughout the world and explicitly connect that journey to the ritual, since they compare the hymns that bring the Aśvins to chariots.

1. Whether today you two are far distant, whether close by, o Aśvins,
   or whether—o you who bring many enjoyments many times—
   (you are) in the midspace, come here.
2. Here are these two who appear most often, bringing their many
   wondrous powers.
   With longing for space, I beseech the pair who are not poor. I call upon
   the two most powerful ones to give enjoyment.

3. You maintain at rest your chariot's one wheel [=the sacrificial fire], the marvel to be marveled at.
   With the other (wheel) [=the sun?] you fly around the generations of the descendants of Nahuṣa and the airy regions by your greatness.
4. And that is accomplished by this (chariot) of yours—(that act) of yours which is praised throughout all (generations):
   Born separately, faultless, you two together have come to kinship with us.

5. When Sūryā mounts your ever swift-running chariot,
   your ruddy birds keep its [=the sun's] glowing heat from burning.
6. O you men, Atri will be attentive to you two with his good thought and attention,
   when he scurries toward your faultless hot(-vessel) with his mouth, o Nāsatyas.

7. Your powerful lead horse is moving. Its thundering is heard on its journeys,
   o Aśvins, when Atri will turn it here along with your wondrous powers, you men.
8. The one that swells with honey follows you two closely, o you honey-seeking Rudras.
   When you two will cross beyond the seas, they [=priests] bring cooked foods to you.

9. It is really true, o Aśvins: they call you joy itself.
   On their journey these two are the most often summoned on the journey; here on their journey they are the most merciful.
10. Let these strengthening formulations for the Aśvins be most luck-bringing—
   these that we fashion like chariots. We have spoken lofty reverence.

V.74 (428) Aśvins

Paura Ātreya
10 verses: anuṣṭubh

The hymn opens with the poet wondering where the Aśvins can be (vs. 1). Are they with another people (vs. 2)? Or to whom are they traveling (vs. 3)? The poet wishes them to come to Atri—as in the last hymn, the poet himself (vs. 1)—and to seek out his poetic formulations (vs. 3), not those of others. Several verses later, the poet returns once more to beg the Aśvins' attention (vs. 6), to ask again whose inspired poetry and sacrifices have attracted the Aśvins (vs. 7), and to urge them to come to him (vss. 8–10). The last verse of the hymn echoes the first: verse 1 asks where

the Aśvins are (*kū́ ṣṭhaḥ*) and whether they will hear the poet (*śravathaḥ*); verse 10 addresses them wherever they are (*kárhi cid*) and anticipates that they will hear him (*śuśrūyā́tam*). Also, in the first verse the poet addresses the Aśvins as *manāvasū* "whose goods are zeal"—that is, as those who bring vigor and passion to sacrificers—and *vṛṣaṇvasū* "whose goods are bull-like," but in the last he speaks not of goods that the Aśvins bring but rather of the "good benefits" (*vásvīḥ... bhújaḥ*) the Aśvins will receive, thus reversing the beneficiaries of the goods.

How the internal verses set within this frame are connected to the rest of the hymn is not clear. They tell how the Aśvins rescued Paura from real or metaphorical waters (vs. 4) and Cyavāna from old age and impotence (vs. 5). The story of Paura, whom the Anukramaṇī identifies as the poet of the hymn, is told elliptically. There is a cryptic etymological play on Paura's name in 4ab that suggests that Paura had lost the prosperity that was his by right, or at least by name, but that he was restored to "muchness" by the Aśvins. Unfortunately, the meaning of *paurá* is not secure and therefore neither is this interpretation. This word play on *paurá* is set within a causal *hí*-clause, which normally would be dependent but here apparently is not, and it is then followed by an incomplete dependent clause, which lacks both subject and verb. The abstract dative *gr̥bhītátātaye* "for captivity" suggests supplying a verb derived from √*gr̥bh* "capture"—"they capture him" or the like—but this interpretation is not at all secure. Is the fragmented syntax an icon of the desperate situation that the Aśvins were able to redress?

1. Where in heaven are you today, o divine Aśvins whose goods are zeal?
   Will you hear this, o you whose goods are bull-like? Atri is trying to win you.
2. Where are these two? Where are they famed—the Nāsatyas, the two gods in heaven?
   Among what people do you take your place? Which of you two is in company with rivers?
3. To whom do you journey? To whom do you come? Toward whom do you harness your chariot?
   In whose formulations do you delight? We wish you to seek (ours).
4. For you two bring to life even Paura, who was swimming in the waters, for the sake of "muchness" (*paurá*), o (you who are) "Muchness" itself,
   when him for captivity, like a lion in the track of deceit...
5. You remove the covering like a cloak from Cyavāna, who had become old;
   as a youth—since you two made him so again—he meets the desire of his wife.
6. Because your praise singer is here and we have in our sights (to see) your splendor,
   now hear me and come with help, o you whose goods are prizewinners.

7. Which of the many mortals has won you two today for himself?
   Which inspired poet, o you conveyed by inspiration? Who with his
   sacrifices, you whose goods are prizewinners?
8. Let your chariot, fastest traveling of chariots, travel here, Aśvins,
   even across the many (regions), as it seeks us—(it is) the praise song
   among mortals here.
9. Let our celebration of you be our luck, o honey-seekers.
   Like a pair of falcons fly this way with your birds, o discerning ones.
10. Aśvins, when you should hear this call anywhere,
    good benefits are yours and nourishments nourish you.

V.75 (429) Aśvins

Avasyu Ātreya
9 verses: paṅkti

Two themes dominate this hymn. One, announced at the beginning of the first verse, is the chariot of the Aśvins, which conveys the gods to the sacrificial place. The other is the call of the poet, the theme of the hymn's refrain. The two are intimately connected, since the purpose of the poet's praise is to bring the Aśvins on their chariot to the sacrificial ground. In verse 2 the poet imagines the chariot passing by the hymns of other sacrificers that claim to win the Aśvins and continuing on toward his sacrifice. Because the hymn is leading the Aśvins toward the poet, the voice of the poet rides on the chariot (vs. 4), and the Aśvins' horses are harnessed by the thought of the poet (vs. 6). In 7cd the Aśvins are invoked to travel *tiráś cid* "even across," but it is not clear across what. Geldner (and others, see Pirart 2001: 290–92) suggests a haplology of **aryáḥ* because of the following *aryayā́.* In this interpretation, the line could mean "even across what belongs to the stranger" or "even across the strangers" or the like. By contrast, we interpret pāda c as a recollection of 2b and therefore supply the phrase "all those 'I shall win'-s." But in either case the Aśvins are again asked not to be seduced by the hymns and sacrifices of others, but to drive by them, heeding the poet's summons to *his* sacrifice.

1. The most loved chariot—a bull and a vehicle for goods—
   does your praise singer, the seer, attend upon with his praise, o Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
2. Journey here, Aśvins, beyond and across all those "I shall win"-s.
   o you wondrous ones with golden tracks, with good favor, with the
   Sindhu as your vehicle.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
3. Bringing treasures to us, Aśvins, come here, both of you,
   o Rudras with golden tracks, whose goods are prizewinners, since you
   are pleased.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.

4. The musical (voice) of him having good rhythm is set upon your chariot, o you whose goods are bull-like,
   and your wild animal of marvelous form [=the sacrificial fire?], your lead horse, creates nourishments.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
5. As vigorous charioteers of attentive mind hearing a summons,
   with your birds (as your team) you run down unduplicitous Cyavāna.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
6. Men, let your horses harnessed by thought, frothing at the mouth,
   let your birds carry you here, together with your good favors, to drink (soma), Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
7. Aśvins, come here to this place. Nāsatyas, do not lose the track.
   Even beyond (all those "I shall win"-s) in the search for your compatriot, journey around your course, o undeceivable ones.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
8. In this sacrifice, o undeceivable lords of beauty, you attend to the singer
   seeking help as he sings—both of you, Aśvins.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.
9. Dawn with her glowing herds has appeared. Agni has been installed at the right ritual moment.
   The immortal chariot has been harnessed for you, o wondrous ones whose goods are bull-like.
   – O honey-rich ones, hear my summons.

V.76 (430) Aśvins

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

In the later ritual the Hotar recites this hymn in the evening as the Adhvaryu and his assistants fan the fire to heat the Pravargya vessel. Verse 1 refers directly to the hot milk oblation offered to the Aśvins in the Pravargya ritual, but, as Houben (2000: 10) observes, the hymn itself indicates the dawn as the time of its recitation. Time is a central theme of the hymn: it is now that the Aśvins are praised (vs. 2), and at present the oblation is extended to the Aśvins (vs. 3). The Aśvins should respond to the praise and the offering because they come at all times, both day and night (vss. 2, 3). Because of the present offering and the ever-presence of the Aśvins, the poet hopes for the Aśvins' "present help" (vs. 5).

Although perhaps not as strongly, the poet puts a similar emphasis on place. The Aśvins should "journey here" (vs. 1, 3), where they are praised (vs. 2), for this is their place, home, house, and dwelling (vs. 4). The result is that wealth and good fortune will be here (vs. 5).

1. Agni shines toward the face of Dawn. The words of inspired poets, traveling to the gods, have arisen.
   Now, o you two charioteers, directed this way, journey here toward this hot-(vessel) swelling (with milk), Aśvins.
2. The best who come, they do not compromise the (offering) prepared (for them). Near and now the Aśvins are praised with songs here
   as the best who come with help by day and at the evening mealtime, in response to trouble and as the best luck for the pious man.
3. And journey here at the ingathering of cattle and at the early morning of the day, at midday and at the rising of the sun, and
   by day and at night with your most luck-bringing help. Does the drink not right now stretch to the Aśvins?
4. For from of old this is your place, your home. This is your house, Aśvins, this your dwelling.
   Journey here to us from lofty heaven and mountain, here from the waters, carrying refreshment and nourishment.
5. – May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy itself and provides good guidance.
   Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all that brings good fortune.

V.77 (431) Aśvins

Atri Bhauma
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the preceding one, this hymn is attributed to Atri, and shares with it the same meter and same final verse. The hymn refers to the Aśvins in the third person in every verse except the central one (3), when the poet turns to the Aśvins and addresses them directly, describing to them the chariot that brings them to his sacrifice. The description of the chariot compares or even identifies this chariot with the sacrifice, since "golden-skinned, honey-colored, ghee-backed, and carrying nourishments" can easily describe the sacrificial fire.

The time of the Aśvins' arrival is the particular concern of the poet. They are the gods *prātaryā́vaṇā* "who journey in the early morning," and the poet insists that his hymn and offerings are given at the right time. They are not given too early when it is still dark, for the evening is the wrong time to make the offerings (vs. 2ab)—although whether it is the wrong time in general or the wrong time for the Aśvins in particular is unsure. Likewise, unlike others he does not make his offerings too late, after dawn has already broken (2cd). The "ungenerous vulture" in 1cd is probably a sacrificer who gave too few offerings too late.

1. Sacrifice to the first ones, the two who journey in the early morning.
   They will drink before the ungenerous vulture [=rival sacrificer].
   Since the Aśvins receive the sacrifice in the early morning, the poets
   proclaim them as those who receive the first portion.
2. Sacrifice to them in the early morning, urge on the Aśvins: there is no
   (sacrifice) in the evening, (when it is) displeasing for it to travel to the gods.
   And it is the other one, not us, who sacrifices when dawn has (already)
   come: the earlier the sacrificer, the greater his gain.
3. Golden-skinned, honey-colored, ghee-backed, and carrying
   nourishments, your chariot turns here,
   swift as thought and fleet as the wind, by which you journey beyond all
   difficult ways, o Aśvins.
4. Who has toiled most for the Nāsatyas and will give the most pleasing
   (offering) at the distribution of food,
   he carries his offspring across by his labors. He would ever pass beyond
   those who do not raise their radiance on high.
5. – May we come together with the present help of the Aśvins, which is joy
   itself and provides good guidance.
   Here to us bring wealth and here heroes, you two immortals, and here all
   that brings good fortune.

V.78 (432) Aśvins

Saptavadhri Ātreya
9 verses: uṣṇih 1–3, triṣṭubh 4, anuṣṭubh 5–9

In the normal arrangement, hymns of more verses precede those of fewer verses, but this hymn of nine verses follows hymns of five, a discrepancy that suggests that this hymn is either a later addition to the collection or a composite, created of originally separate hymns, or both. Formally and thematically it appears to be a composite. It uses three different meters, unevenly divided among its verses. The first three verses, which invite the Aśvins to the soma-pressing, are all in the same meter, begin with an invocation to the Aśvins, and have a common refrain. They thus form a coherent piece. The last three verses, likewise in the same meter, are an incantation to facilitate childbirth at the proper time. Verse 7 apparently addresses the father of the child, verse 8 the child himself, and verse 9 the Aśvins or whatever other powers might help the childbirth. As Pirart (2001: 330–31) notes, this incantation has parallels at Atharvaveda Śaunaka I.11.6 and Vājasaneyisaṃhitā Mādhyaṃdina VIII.28.

The middle three verses provide a transition from the invocation in verses 1–3 to the incantation in verses 7–9. Verse 4, which alone is in triṣṭubh meter, continues to ask the Aśvins to come, but they are to come not to attend the soma rite but to bring help, as they did when they rescued Atri. Atri's situation, stuck within the earth cleft and unable to come out, is compared to that of a woman in need,

probably a woman in a difficult pregnancy whose child does not come out. Then verses 5–6 likewise compare the situation of Saptavadhri. He too is stuck and needs to be set free by the Aśvins, and his release is similarly compared to the opening of the womb so that a child may be born. The details of Saptavadhri's difficulty and even Saptavadhri's identity are unclear—he appears to be Atri in X.39.9 but elsewhere he is a different seer. According to Sāyaṇa he was trapped in small wooden casket from which the Aśvins set him free, but this narrative is likely a commentarial invention.

The entrapment of these seers, already compared in the telling to the situation of a woman in labor, not only introduce the incantation in the last verses, but also provide paradigmatic narratives for the birth of the child. As the Aśvins released these seers, so they will release the child from the body of his mother.

1. O Aśvins, come here! O Nāsatyas, do not lose the track!
   – Like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.
2. O Aśvins, like antelopes, like buffaloes searching after pasturage,
   like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.
3. O Aśvins, whose goods are prizewinners, take pleasure in our sacrifice to
   your liking.
   – Like wild geese, fly here to the soma-pressings.

4. As when Atri, sinking down into the earth cleft, called upon you again
   and again, like a young woman in need (at childbirth),
   now by the very speed of a falcon, come here, Aśvins, with your most
   luck-bringing (help).
5. O tree, spread apart, like the womb of a woman about to give birth.
   Hear my call, Aśvins, and free Saptavadhri.
6. For the seer Saptavadhri, who is fearful and in need,
   o Aśvins, you bend the tree together and apart by your cunning.

7. As the wind sways a lotus-pond in every direction,
   so let your unborn child stir. Let him in his tenth month come out.
8. As the wind, as the forest, as the ocean stirs,
   so you in your tenth month—descend together with the afterbirth.
9. Having lain for ten months within his mother, let the boy
   come out, alive and unharmed—alive from his living mother.

V.79 (433) Dawn

Satyaśravas Ātreya
10 verses: paṅkti

A hymn with a remarkably unwavering focus on material gain. Since the priestly gifts (dakṣiṇā) are distributed at the dawn ritual, the goddess Dawn is often associated

with wealth and giving, but here very little attention is given to any other aspect of the goddess. The tone is set by the increasingly monotonous refrain: "o well-born lady, liberal with horses." Several patrons are named in the first verses (1–3), and the poet hopes that patrons in general will be the recipients of Dawn's bounty, in order for them to redistribute it to the poets (4–8).

The usual attention to Dawn's beauty, her first appearance, her journey, her cows, and so forth is entirely missing in this hymn, which does, however, contain one striking image, in verse 9. Why a laggard Dawn would be compared to a thief isn't entirely clear, but it is quite possibly because thieves worked at night.

1. Awaken us today for great wealth, o Dawn, as heaven-bright one,
 just as you also awakened us at Satyaśravas Vāyya's
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
2. You who dawned forth at Sunītha Śaucadratha's, o Daughter of Heaven,
 dawn forth at the mightier Satyaśravas Vāyya's
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
3. As one bringing goods hither, dawn forth for us today, o Daughter of Heaven—
 you who dawned forth at the mightier Satyaśravas Vāyya's
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
4. The (oblation-)conveyors who greet you with praises, far-radiant one—
 those very splendid ones (will become) possessed of gifts and lovely presents, through your bounties, o bounteous one
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
5. For whenever these throngs appear to you (fit) for the giving of bounties,
 eager, they surround those who give immoderate benefit [=patrons]
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
6. Upon them confer glory in heroes, bounteous Dawn—upon the patrons,
 who, bounteous (themselves), have granted us immoderate benefits
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
7. To them bring lofty brilliance and glory, o bounteous Dawn,
 to the patrons who apportion to us benefits consisting of horses and cows
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
8. And bring to us refreshments along with cows, o Daughter of Heaven,
 simultaneously with the rays of the sun, with his glittering, gleaming beams
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.
9. Dawn forth, Daughter of Heaven. Don't keep dragging out your work over a long time,
 lest the sun scorch you with his beam as (he might) a swindling thief
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.

10. So much you ought to give, o Dawn, or more—
 you who, as you dawn, far-radiant one, do not dwindle for the praisers
 – o well-born lady, liberal with horses.

V.80 (434) Dawn

Satyaśravas Ātreya
6 verses: triṣṭibh

Although this hymn is attributed to the same poet as V.79 by the Anukramaṇī, it is entirely different in tone. Dawn's association with wealth is mentioned in verse 3, but the focus is first on her journey (vss. 1–3) and then, in the second half of this brief hymn (vss. 4–6), on the beauty of her body as it is slowly revealed in the growing light, in images of delicate sensuality.

Each verse but the first begins with the emphatic pronoun *eṣā́* "she," and there is no doubt that "she" is all that matters in the hymn.

1. The lofty one whose course is brilliant, who is truthful through her truth, whose breath is ruddy, who is widely radiant,
 goddess Dawn who brings the sun here—in response to her do the inspired poets awaken with their poetic thoughts.
2. She, worthy to be seen, awakening the people, making the paths easy to travel, drives in the vanguard
 with a lofty chariot, herself lofty, setting all in motion. Dawn extends her light in the vanguard of the days.
3. She, after hitching up with her ruddy cows, without fail has produced her wealth unremittingly.
 Blazing paths for good passage, the goddess, praised by many, bringing all valuables, radiates widely.
4. She, the dappled one, becomes doubly exalted as she reveals her body in the east.
 She follows along the path of truth, straight to the goal. Like one who knows the way, she does not confound the directions.
5. She, like a beauty who knows her own body, has stood up erect like a bather for us to see.
 Thrusting away hatred and the shades of darkness, Dawn, the Daughter of Heaven, has come here with her light.
6. She, the Daughter of Heaven, facing toward men, lets her breast spill over like a fortunate young wife,
 disclosing desirable things to the pious. The young woman has created light once again, as before.

V.81 (435) Savitar

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
5 verses: jagatī

The Anukramaṇī attributes both this and the next hymn, also to Savitar, to Śyāvāśva, the poet of the Marut cycle in this maṇḍala, and indeed the poet names himself at the end of the last verse (5). However, the subject of Savitar does not seem to have inspired him to the same poetic heights as the Maruts did. The hymn depicts Savitar as a power in the cosmos (especially vss. 2–5), but also as a poet and distributor of benefits to mortals (1–2ab).

1. They hitch up their mind and they hitch up their insights—the inspired poets attentive to the poetic inspiration of the lofty inspired poet.
   He distributes the ritual offerings as the only one who knows the patterns. Great is the encircling praise of Savitar.
2. The sage poet fastens all forms upon himself. He has impelled benefit to the two-footed and the four-footed.
   He has looked out across the firmament—Savitar worthy to be chosen. He rules following the lead of Dawn.
3. Whose lead the others have followed: the gods (following) the might of the god with their power;
   who measured out the earthly (spaces)—he, the steed [/Etaśa], (also) measured out the (heavenly) spaces with his greatness: god Savitar.
4. And you travel, Savitar, through the three luminous realms, and you are at home with the rays of the sun.
   And you encircle the night on both sides, and you become Mitra [/an ally], o god, through your supports.
5. And you are master over impulsion, just you alone, and you become Pūṣan through your journeys.
   And you rule over all this world here. Śyāvāśva has achieved his praise for you, Savitar.

V.82 (436) Savitar

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, arranged in tr̥cas

Structuring this hymn is an insistent pun on the name of Savitar (“the Impeller”) derived from the root *sū* “impel”: there are eight separate verbal and nominal forms of this root in the hymn. Savitar is also identified as the Apportioner (Bhaga), who often elsewhere appears as a separate divinity though regularly associated with Savitar, and what he is urged to impel is, for the most part, a good portion for us.

1. This we choose of Savitar's: the sustenance of the god—
   the Apportioner's best vanquishing power, which best confers
   wholeness—(that) would we acquire.
2. For of this Savitar here—his own very self-glorious self-sovereignty
   they do not confound in any way.
3. Because he, Savitar the Apportioner, will impel treasures to the pious,
   we beg him for the brilliant portion.

4. Today, god Savitar, you have impelled to us a good portion consisting of
   offspring.
   Impel away the bad dream.
5. All difficulties impel away, god Savitar.
   What is beneficial, that impel here to us.
6. (If we are) without offense to Aditi, at the impulsion of god Savitar
   might we acquire all things of value.

7. With our hymns we choose today the one with all the gods in his charge,
   the lord of settlements,
   whose impulsion comes true: Savitar.
8. Who goes in front of both these two day-halves unremittingly
   and with good intentions: god Savitar.
9. Who makes all these creatures hearken with his signal-call
   and will impel (them) forth: Savitar.

V.83 (437) Parjanya

Atri Bhauma
10 verses: triṣṭubh 1, 5–8, 10, jagatī 2–4, anuṣṭubh 9

Parjanya ("Thunder") is the subject of only three hymns in the R̥gveda. This lovely hymn, much translated, is reminiscent of the Marut hymns in this maṇḍala, though not ascribed to the same poet. (The Maruts are addressed here in vs. 6.) Vivid images of the power of the thunderstorm are mingled with expressions of thanks for the fructifying effects of the accompanying rains, depicted as sexual in nature. In the last verse the poet describes all the good Parjanya has done, but gently urges him to desist.

1. Address the powerful one with these hymns. Praise Parjanya. With
   reverence seek to entice him here.
   The constantly roaring bull of lively drops deposits his semen as embryo
   in the plants.
2. He smashes apart the trees and also smashes the demons. All creation
   fears him who has the mighty weapon.
   And (even) the blameless one shrinks from the one of bullish powers,
   when Parjanya, thundering, smashes those who do ill.

3. Like a charioteer lashing out at his horses with a whip, he reveals his rain-bearing messengers.
   From afar the thunderings of the lion rise up, when Parjanya produces his rain-bearing cloud.
4. The winds blow forth; the lightning bolts fly. The plants shoot up; the sun swells.
   Refreshment arises for all creation, when Parjanya aids the earth with his semen.
5. At whose commandment the earth bobs up and down, at whose commandment the hoofed (livestock) quivers,
   at whose commandment the plants take on all forms—you, Parjanya—extend to us great shelter.
6. Grant us rain from heaven, o Maruts; make the streams of the bullish stallion swell forth.
   (Parjanya,) come nearby with this thundering, pouring down the waters as the lord, our father.
7. Roar! Thunder! Set an embryo! Fly around with your water-bearing chariot.
   Drag the water-skin unleashed, facing downward. Let uplands and lowlands become alike.
8. The great bucket—turn it up, pour it down. Let the brooks, unleashed, flow forward.
   Inundate Heaven and Earth with ghee. Let there be a good watering hole for the prized cows.
9. When, o Parjanya, constantly roaring, thundering you smash those who do ill,
   all of this here, whatever is on the earth, rejoices in response.
10. You have rained rain: (now) hold it back. You have made the wastelands able to be traversed.
    You have begotten the plants for nourishment, and you have found (this?) inspired thought for the creatures.

V.84 (438) Earth

Atri Bhauma
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This tiny hymn is attributed to the same poet as the preceding hymn to Parjanya and complements that hymn. The poem is a sort of riddle: the first verse establishes that Earth is the addressee, and in the next verse the address to a feminine being (the word “earth” is feminine in gender and conceived of as female) continues. But none of the characteristics mentioned in that verse seem particularly Earth-like. She

is addressed as oscillating and silvery; she is associated with the nights; she "flings" moisture. The riddle is—under what circumstances could Earth be so described? The answer: under the darkness of the monsoon clouds, when thunder causes her to shake (thus "oscillating"; see V.83.5) and she is "silvery" with rain, which she "flings" in the forms of streams and rivulets down her slopes, mentioned in verse 1. This solution was adumbrated by Thieme (1964: 58) and is discussed further in Jamison (2013).

If the audience doesn't solve the riddle in verse 2, verse 3 provides the answer.

1. Yes indeed! (It is) just so: you bear the pressure of the mountains,
   o Earth,
   as you bring the ground to life with your greatness, o gently sloping
   great one.
2. Praises sound in response to you, oscillating lady, through the nights,
   as you fling the swelling moisture forward like a (horse) neighing for a
   prize, silvery one—
3. You who, steadfast yourself, keep fast the trees all across the earth by
   your strength,
   when the lightning bolts of the dark cloud and the rains from heaven
   rain for you.

V.85 (439) Varuṇa

Atri Bhauma
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is often admired and translated because of its grand vision of Varuṇa as a creator god (vss. 1–6) and as a god who forgives the faults of human beings (vss. 7–8). But what is the connection between these two sides of Varuṇa? The poet joins the two functions of Varuṇa formally by the repetition of the accented preverb *ví-*, meaning "out," "apart," or the like. In fashioning the world and sustaining life, Varuṇa "split apart" (*ví… jaghā́na*, 1c), "stretched out" (*ví… tatāna*, 2a), "soaks" (*vy ùnatti*, 3d), and "measured out" (*ví mamé*, 5d). All this leads up to the plea that Varuṇa "unbind" (*ví ṣya*, 8c) the wrongs that people commit. With their sense of opening up and freeing, the verbal compounds with *ví-* create not only a verbal connection between Varuṇa's cosmogonic and redemptive acts, but a logical one as well. On the cosmological plane Varuṇa spread out the world beneath the sun (vs. 1cd), stretched out the midspace (vs. 2ab), and lets loose the rain (vss. 3–4) and the rivers (vs. 6). Analogously, on the moral plane he loosens the fetters that people's evildoing would otherwise create (vs. 8). Thus the hymn is dominated by the name of Varuṇa, which occurs in every verse except one (vs. 6) and the preverb *ví-*. Even where these do not appear, the poet echoes *váruṇa* and *ví-* throughout the hymn by repeating words

containing -*v*- and, especially, beginning with *v*-, for example, *váneṣu* and *vā́jam* opening 2a and 2b, *téna víśvasya* and *yávaṃ ná vr̥ṣṭír ví* at the beginning of 3c and 3d, *váruṇo vāṣṭi* in 4b, *vasata* and *vīrā́ḥ* in 4c and 4d, and so forth.

In all of this, verse 6 is anomalous, since it does not mention Varuṇa by name and does not contain *ví*- or even a word beginning with *v*-. It is generally more difficult to explain why something does not occur than why something does, but the position and content of the verse suggest possible reasons for these omissions. First, the verse may be marked, albeit by absence, because it is the transitional verse from the cosmological themes of the first part of the hymn to the redemptive one of the last two verses. Second, the theme of the verse is the mystery of the god. Its center is the paradox in 6cd that the "sea"—whatever body of water is meant by that—never fills despite the waters flooding into it. The opening line of the verse mentions Varuṇa's *māyā́*, his "cunning," and calls him the *kavítama*, "the foremost sage poet," the one who best knows and best articulates what he knows. The poet may have suppressed overt mention of Varuṇa's name to indicate the impenetrability of his power and mind.

1. Chant forth to the sovereign king a lofty and deep formulation, dear to famed Varuṇa,
   who, like a butcher an animal hide, split apart the earth to form an underlayer for the sun.
2. He stretched out the midspace upon the trees, the prize of victory in the steeds, the milk in the ruddy (cows);
   Varuṇa placed resolve in hearts, fire in waters, the sun in heaven, and soma on the stone.
3. Varuṇa has poured out the cask with its opening below upon the two world-halves and the midspace.
   By this he is king of the whole living world. Like rain the barley, he soaks the land.
4. He soaks the land, the earth, and heaven. When Varuṇa wishes milk to flow, then surely it does:
   the mountains cloak themselves with the rain cloud; showing their might, the heroes [=the Maruts?] let themselves loose.
5. I proclaim this great cunning of the lordly, famed Varuṇa,
   who, standing in the midspace as if with a measuring rod, measured out earth with the sun.
6. And now no one defies this great cunning of the foremost sage poet, the god:
   that the mottled streams, pouring out, do not fill the single sea with water.
7. O Varuṇa, the offense that we have committed against any partner, be he one by alliance or one by custom, or against a brother,
   or against a neighbor—whether native or foreign—o Varuṇa, loosen that.

8. If (we have cheated) as gamblers cheat in a dice game, whether overtly or whether we are unaware,
unbind all these things (so they will be) like loose things, o god. Then would we be dear to you, Varuṇa.

V.86 (440) Indra and Agni

Atri Bhauma
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except virāṭpūrvā 6

Although Agni and Indra separately receive the largest number of R̥gvedic hymns of any of the gods, they have little to do with each other conceptually or ritually, and the relatively few hymns they share (eleven in all) tend either to be banal, boiler-plate hymns without much content, or else ones favoring one or the other of the gods. There are elements of both types in this hymn. On the one hand, Indra and Agni are invoked as a pair through much of the hymn with fairly all-purpose phraseology. On the other, the two exploits described (in 1cd and the very difficult 3cd, the middle of the hymn) are Indraic: the first a clear reference to the Vala myth, though with Trita, not Indra, as hero; the second a reference to the Vr̥tra myth, with some curious features, especially the unidentified wooden object.

1. Indra and Agni, the mortal whom you both help in the prize-contests,
that one splits open even the fastnesses to (reach) their brilliant (contents), as Trita (did) the voices (of the cows? of the rivers?).
2. You two who are difficult to surpass in battles, who are worthy of fame at the prize-contests,
who sur(mount) the five domains—these two, Indra and Agni, we invoke.
3. Vehement is the force of those two bounteous ones, sharp their missile.
With the wooden (weapon?) in the hands of the Vr̥tra-smasher he [=Vr̥tra-smashing Indra] goes questing (in his quest) for cattle.
4. In our quest for chariots we call upon you two, Indra and Agni,
the two lords of powerful generosity, the knowing ones who most long for hymns.
5. The two, growing strong through the days, the two gods undeceptive to the mortal,
just these two do I set in front, the two gods like portions for a steed, though themselves deserving (portions).
6. Thus to Indra and Agni this forceful oblation [/invocation] has been offered, like ghee purified by stones.
You two, fix lofty fame fast in the patrons, wealth in the singers—fix refreshment in the singers.

V.87 (441) Maruts

Evayāmarut Ātreya
9 verses: atijagatī

This final hymn of Maṇḍala V is clearly an addition to the original collection, and it is composed in an unusual lyric meter found only in this hymn and a few scattered verses in the rest of the saṃhitā, consisting of five pādas arranged in two half-verses: 12 12 / 12 8 8. (It is convenient here to place the final two pādas on a separate verse line.) The end of the first hemistich of each verse is marked by the unusual formation *evayā́marut,* which serves as an internal refrain, syntactically unconnected to the rest of the verse. This word is aberrantly formed, and our translation reflects what we consider its intent, rather than a literal value. (The Anukramaṇī names Evayāmarut as the poet of this hymn, but the name is obviously secondarily derived from the refrain. We would not be surprised if Śyāvāśva was responsible for this playful Marut hymn.) Indeed, the syntax is lax in a number of verses, which appear to be constructed of metrical phrases with internal syntactic unity but loosely strung together.

In terms of content the most striking feature is the close association between the god Viṣṇu and the Maruts. The Maruts are mentioned with Viṣṇu in other places in the R̥gveda, but not in such a sustained fashion as here. The thematic connection between them is not entirely clear, but Viṣṇu's famous three strides from earth to heaven, via the midspace, do remind us of the ever-journeying Maruts, who generally inhabit the midspace but are found also both in heaven and on earth.

1. Let your thoughts go forth to mighty, mountain-born Viṣṇu,
 accompanied by the Maruts—Maruts on the march—
 to the troop worshiped at the beginning of the sacrifice, well-spangled,
 powerful, fortunate in their quest, of boisterous commandment, (who
 are) strength (itself).
2. Who—(both) those produced by might and those self(-produced)—
 proclaim (their strength) with their know-how—Maruts on
 the march—
 with regard to your will—its strength, o Maruts, is not to be assailed;
 with regard to their giving, their might—that (strength) is like
 unassailable mountains.
3. Who are heard from lofty heaven through a hymn [/on the mountain],
 beautifully blazing, good in their essence—Maruts on the march—
 in whose seat no meddler holds sway—
 flashing out by themselves like fires—(the chariots?) of the boisterous
 ones (go) forth streaming.
4. The wide-striding one [=Viṣṇu] has stridden forth from the great
 common seat—Maruts on the march.
 When from his own (seat) upon the (mountains') backs he has hitched
 up by himself

the competitors of extensive might, he goes, growing strong with kindness, with the superior men.

5. Vehement like your roar, the driving turbulent forceful bull [=Viṣṇu] sets (the earth) atremble—Maruts on the march—
   with whom the victorious self-luminous ones stretch out straight—
   the golden ones possessing taut reins, good weapons, arrows.
6. Your might has no further shore, o you whose strength has grown. Let your turbulent strength be of aid—Maruts on the march—
   for, in the sight of all, you are firm-mounted (charioteers) in the onslaught.
   Deliver us from insult, (you who are) like blazing fires.
7. Let these Rudras, good battlers, like fires powerfully brilliant, be of aid—Maruts on the march.
   Long and broad the earthly seat spreads out,
   when at the drives of them, whose offenses are beyond harm, the troops of great (Viṣṇu) ap(proach).
8. Without hatred, come on your way to us here, Maruts. Hear the call of the singer—Maruts on the march.
   O you of equal spirit, along with great Viṣṇu,
   like charioteers with wondrous skill, keep hatreds far away in the distance.
9. Come to our sacrifice, you worthy of the sacrifice, with its good labor. Hear the call in undemonic (spirit)—Maruts on the march.
   Like the most ancient mountains in distant heaven,
   you, o discerning ones, should be difficult to restrain at an insult to this one [=singer].

VI

Maṇḍala VI

The VIth Maṇḍala, attributed to the Bharadvāja clan, contains seventy-five hymns. The Anukramaṇī identifies the majority of the hymns as products of the eponymous clan poet himself, Bharadvāja, whose patronymic is Bārhaspatya. These include all of the Agni series (1–16), much of the Indra series (17–30 and 37–43), the Pūṣan series (53–60), and the miscellaneous hymns to various divinities toward the end of the maṇḍala (61–74). The composite hymns coming at the end of the Indra series (44–46, also 48) are ascribed to a different Bārhaspatya poet, Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya, but since Śaṃyu is a speaking name ("seeking luck," reinterpreted from the archaic compound *śaṃyóḥ* "luck and lifetime"), this name may well be a nickname of Bharadvāja. The remaining hymns are attributed to several different descendants of Bharadvāja, all bearing the patronymic Bhāradvāja; these include a number of Indra hymns (31–36, 47), the All God series (49–52), and the final hymn of the maṇḍala, the famous weapon hymn (75).

Although the Indra hymns outnumber the Agni hymns, the Indra hymns are, for the most part, not terribly notable, though deftly executed. By contrast, the Agni hymns specialize in imaginative descriptions of physical fire, and VI.9, a hymn ostensibly dedicated to Agni Vaiśvānara, contains one of the most striking meditations on the acquisition and employment of poetic craft in the R̥gveda. The hymn VI.28, interrupting the Indra cycle, contains a charming blessing of the cows, and the "clan" hymn, VI.48, repays the attention its difficulties demand. This hymn contains, inter alia, a remarkable, if cryptic, address to the god Pūṣan, and Pūṣan is an especial preoccupation of the Bharadvāja poets, with VI.53–60 containing the only sustained cycle of hymns in the R̥gveda addressed to this minor deity. Other gods, well represented in other maṇḍalas, receive relatively short shrift: there is only a single hymn to the Maruts (66), two to Uṣas (64–65), and so on.

VI.1 (442) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

A rather stately hymn, appropriate for the first in the Agni sequence in Maṇḍala VI. It concerns only the ritual fire, with almost no mention of its physical substance,

and unlike the typical dawn kindling sequence, the hymn depicts the arrival and installation of Agni as Hotar and, especially, the ritual fire as joint possession and responsibility of the whole Ārya community, as Proferes (2007: 33) points out. As the first hymn in the maṇḍala, it thus establishes an image of a settled and well-ordered society unified in its devotion to the gods to which the rest of the maṇḍala will be dedicated.

The arrival and installation occupy verses 1–3; verses 4–8 show Agni's reach through the community, from the individual house, to the clan and settlements, and indeed to all who claim Manu (the first sacrificer) as ancestor. Verses 9–10 detail the homage and service Agni deserves, and the remaining verses (11–13) the favors we ask in return.

1. You, o Agni, as first minder of this insightful thought here, became the
 Hotar, o wondrous one.
 You, o bull, made (the thought) into power difficult to surpass, to
 overpower all (other) power.
2. Then you sat down as Hotar, superior sacrificer, prospering in the
 footprint of refreshment, to be reverently invoked.
 You are the first that men have followed when they seek the gods,
 distinguishing themselves greatly for wealth.
3. The wakeful ones have followed (you) when you come with many goods
 as if with a troop, (and they follow) the wealth nearby you—
 gleaming Agni, lovely to see, lofty, who receives the omentum (of the
 sacrificial beast as offering), shining through all the days.
4. Pursuing the track of the god with homage, seeking fame, they will attain
 fame indestructible;
 even the names they have assumed are worthy of worship. They take
 pleasure in your auspicious manifestation.
5. You do the settlements strengthen on earth; you (do) both of the "riches
 of the peoples" [=patrons and singers?] (strengthen).
 You, o surpassing one—become a rescuer worthy of note, a father, a
 mother forever for the sons of Manu.
6. Dear Agni is to be served among the clans. As Hotar he has sat down,
 the gladdening superior sacrificer.
 You, shining in our house, do we reverently approach, on bended knee,
 with homage.
7. You do we of good insight implore when you are new, Agni, seeking your
 benevolence, seeking the gods—
 you led the clans, while shining through the lofty luminous realm of
 heaven, o Agni.
8. (You do we implore), the sage poet, the clanlord of each and every clan,
 the lavishly overflowing bull of the settled domains,
 impelling the forward progress (of the sacrifice), prospering, pure—Agni
 who deserves the sacrifice, who rules over riches.

9. O Agni, that mortal has sacrificed and ritually labored who after kindling you has achieved your oblation-giving,
   who knows his way around the offering with its acts of homage. Just he will acquire all things of value, when aided by you.
10. To you right here, the great one, great honor would we do, with acts of homage, o Agni, with kindling wood, and with oblations,
   with the altar, o son of strength, with hymns, with solemn words. May we take our place in your auspicious benevolence.
11. You who stretch through the two world-halves with your light and who through (words of) fame deserve to be famed as surpassing,
   with lofty substantial prizes for us, with rich ones, Agni, radiate out more widely.
12. O good one, manfully establish for us forever and for our progeny and posterity abundance of livestock.
   Let there be for us many lofty refreshments that keep evil at a distance and auspicious things bringing good fame.
13. Many goods many-fold in their goodness might I attain of you through seeking you, o King Agni.
   For many are the goods in you, o Agni of many favors, for the one who does (you) honor, since you are king.

VI.2 (443) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: anuṣṭubh, except śakvarī 11

In its first half (vss. 1–5) this hymn echoes the themes of VI.1: Agni as the joint concern of all the separate units of Ārya society (and indeed of the gods as well) and the success that attends the man who fulfills his ritual responsibilities to Agni. The hymn ends the same way (vss. 10–11), with special mention of Agni's position in the individual house as well as his role as clanlord. The similarity between beginning and ending is marked by a signal of ring composition: the god Mitra compared to Agni in both the first and last verses. Agni is often compared with or identified with Mitra ("Ally, Alliance") because of his position on earth as guest and helper of men, though himself a god, and because, as god, he mediates the sacrificial alliance between gods and men.

By contrast, the verses in between (6–9) offer a sequence of increasingly dense and complex images of fire, starting with a simple one of whirling smoke and sunlike brightness (vs. 6), but the comparisons in verses 7cd–8 rely on multiple puns and terse and elliptical phraseology. This middle section sets the stage for the rest of the Agni cycle with its focus on the physical aspects of fire.

1. You, o Agni, like Mitra are indeed master of the glory belonging to the settlements.
   You prosper fame like prosperity, o good one without boundaries.
2. It is you then that the boundaried domains reverently invoke, with sacrifices and with hymns;
   to you drives the prizewinning (horse), avoiding the wolf, crossing (the mid)space, the one common to all the boundaried domains.
3. In concert the men of heaven kindle you as beacon of the sacrifice,
   when the human race here, seeking favor, has called upon (you) in the ceremony.
4. The mortal who will bring (the sacrifice) to fulfillment with his insight and will perform ritual labor for you of good gifts,
   with the help of lofty heaven he crosses hatreds like narrow straits.
5. The mortal who after kindling (you) will achieve the offering to you and the whetting of you,
   he prospers his dwelling place, (so that it has many) branches and hundred(-year) lifespans, o Agni.
6. Your smoke, when it is in heaven, is turbulent in motion, stretched out (there) gleaming,
   for you shine with your body, o pure one, like the sun with its brilliance.
7. For now you are to be reverently invoked among the clans, as our dear guest,
   to be protected like a son who brings delight to the home, (but also) to be enflamed like a battle-lusty (warrior) in a stronghold.
8. For according to your purpose you are anointed in the wood(en cup) (like soma) [/in your home =hearth] [/driven into the wood(en cup)] like a prize-seeker who gets results.
   (You are) encompassing like a household (that encompasses all its members) through your independent power; (you are) made to go in circles like a young steed (being trained).
9. You (eat) just these unstirrable things, Agni, like livestock in a pasture.
   (This is your) principle: that your dexterous (flames?) hew the woods, o unaging one.
10. Because you pursue (your ritual duties) as Hotar in the house for the clans who perform the ceremonies, o Agni,
    make them unified, o clanlord; enjoy (our) oblation, o Aṅgiras.
11. O god Agni with the might of Mitra, to us you call the gods, call the grace of the two world-halves.
    Pursue well-being, good dwelling, pursue the men of heaven. May we cross over hatreds, over narrow straits difficult to traverse.
    May we cross over; with your help may we cross over.

VI.3 (444) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The first two verses of this hymn promise success to the mortal who behaves properly and performs his sacrificial duties well. With these decorous sentiments out of the way, the poet can indulge himself for the rest of the hymn (vss. 3–8) in a series of compressed and vivid images of fire as a natural substance, involving both sight (esp. vss. 3–5, 8) and sound (esp. vss. 6–7). The almost feverish succession of image upon image and the contorted phraseology are reminiscent of the depictions of natural fire in VI.2.6–9, but allowed even freer rein and more space. The hymn ends abruptly, without the usual prayers for benefits or even a summary verse calling attention to the praise just offered to Agni. It is a wild, exhilarating, and often baffling ride, especially in the original Sanskrit.

1. O Agni, he who protects the truth and is born in truth will dwell in peace; he who seeks you as god will reach broad light,
   that mortal whom you, o god, as Varuṇa in concert with Mitra, protect from narrow straits along with abandonment.
2. He has sacrificed with sacrifices, he has labored with ritual labors; for Agni who brings wishes to success he has performed pious work—
   so the displeasure of eminent ones will never reach that mortal, nor will narrow straits, nor delusion.
3. (You) whose appearance is spotless like that of the sun: when your fearsome insight comes here as you blaze,
   rich spoils (become yours), since (you are) armed. (But) on his own this one here [=you, Agni], born in the wood(s), is sometimes a cozy nest.
4. Sharp is his course, great his form. He will snap with his mouth like a horse being bridled.
   Lolling his tongue out, like an axe (its blade), he makes the wood "run" like runny stuff [=liquefies it] as he burns.
5. He, just like an archer, has aimed (his arrow), about to shoot. He has whetted its point like a blade of copper—
   he, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice), who is like a bird whose swooping is brilliant by night, who sits in the woods [/on wood], whose plumage is (fit for) rapid flight.
6. Like a hoarse-voiced (singer), at the dawning of the ruddy (dawn), he keeps muttering [=crackles] with his flame, he of Mitra's might,
   the ruddy one who (mutters) to them by night, who (mutters) by day to men—the immortal ruddy one who (mutters) by day to men.
7. He whose (roar), like that of heaven, keeps roaring as he does honor, (that) bull keeps roaring in the tree, in the plants—

he who, like a traveler in the (sun's) heat, going with a swoop, with a flight, has *stretched with his goods to the two world-halves, who (thus) have (in him) a good husband.

8. Or who (flashes) at his feedings (of fuel) and at the associated chants [/with his associated rays], (that one) keeps flashing like lightning with his own tempests.
   Or who fashioned the troop of Maruts like a R̥bhu [/craftsman], he, turbulent and wild, has flashed.

VI.4 (445) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A more conventionally structured hymn than the last two with less knotty phraseology. It begins (vs. 1) by asking Agni to sacrifice for us today as always, in his accustomed role (vs. 2). It ends (vss. 7–8) with a statement of our service to Agni and prayers for benefits. The verses in between (3–6) describe fire in its naturalistic aspect, as in the two previous hymns but generally in more straightforward terms (vs. 5 is an exception and has been variously interpreted).

1. Just as you, o Hotar, will (always) sacrifice with sacrifices at Manu's attendance on the gods, o son of strength,
   even so for us today sacrifice in the same way to the same gods—you willing, to them willing, o Agni.
2. Far radiant like a vision at dawn, Agni worthy to be acquired takes delight in our extolling—
   he who through his whole life has been the immortal among the mortals, their guest who awakes at dawn, the Jātavedas.
3. He, whose formless mass [=smoke] they [=mortals] marvel at as the heavens do, he (then) clothes himself in lights, like the brilliant sun.
   He who, unaging and pure, dispels (hatreds), he has pierced the primordial (establishments) even of the Devourer.
4. You, o son (of strength), are eloquent when you sit for your meal. Agni right from birth has made his own course into his food.
   You, o winner of nourishment, establish nourishment for us. Like a king, you have conquered; you dwell peacefully in a place without wolves.
5. He who eats the wild food sharply, like the wind he goes as ruler across the nights.
   May we, who (serve) you, outstrip the hostilities of (ill-)intentions, as a steed does the (other) "flying" (steeds), as he curves around the curves (of a racecourse).

6. Like the sun with its radiant rays, o Agni, you stretch through the two world-halves with your light.
   The bright one, anointed, leads (us) around the dark shades with his flame, like the descendant of Uśij [=fire-priest/poet Kakīṣvant Dairghatamasa] soaring in flight [=in exhilaration of soma?].
7. Since we have chosen you, most gladdening with (your) ray-flames, with our (chant-)flames, listen hard to us, Agni.
   You, Āyu, like Indra by virtue of your power or your divinity, do the most manly ones fill with benefit.
8. Now for us, Agni, pursue well-being and riches along wolfless paths. Carry us across narrow straits.
   Grant these things to the patrons and favor to the singer. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.5 (446) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

An unremarkable hymn. It begins "I call for you (all)"—the poet announcing that he is performing his ritual task for his priestly colleagues. He continues with praise of Agni and description of his roles, including that of giver of goods (vss. 1–3). The next two verses contrast the enemy of the mortals present and the punishment he should receive from Agni (vs. 4) with the pious server and the rewards he deserves (vs. 5). Two more verses (6–7) urge Agni to perform these tasks.

1. I call for you upon the son of strength, the youth of undeceptive speech, the youngest one, with our thoughts—
   the provident one of many choices who sends all choice treasures, the one without deceit.
2. To you, o Hotar of many faces, the sacrificial ones have set goods in motion at evening and at dawn,
   you, the pure one, in whom (all) auspicious things are encompassed, as the earth (encompasses) all creatures.
3. You sat down among these clans here from olden days; by your will you became charioteer of valuables.
   Therefore you send goods in due order to him who does (you) honor, o observant Jātavedas.
4. Whoever at a distance will assail us, whoever close by will be rapacious, o Agni with Mitra's might,
   with your own unaging bulls [=flames], most scorching one, scorch him with your scorching heat, o you of scorching heat.

5. Whoever with sacrifice and with kindling wood, who with solemn speeches and with chants will ritually serve you, o son of strength,
   he, provident among mortals, o immortal one, shines out with wealth, with brilliance, with fame.
6. Do this straightaway, o Agni, when prompted: thrust away rivals with strength, strong one.
   When you are praised through the days, anointed with words, then take pleasure in the singer. Listen to his thought.
7. May we attain this desire, Agni, through your help. May we attain wealth, o wealthy one, which affords good heroes.
   May we attain the prize when we seek the prize. May we attain your unaging brilliance, o unaging one.

VI.6 (447) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Most of this hymn consists of a vivid depiction of destructive fire raging across the earth, though the first half-verse establishes a ritual context and the last verse (7) begs Agni for wealth. The hymn is full of phonetic and etymological figures, particularly the last, intensely alliterative verse.

1. Forth to the son of strength with newer (speech), with a sacrifice, seeking a way, seeking help,
   he [=the mortal] goes in pursuit—to the heavenly Hotar, wood-hewing, gleaming but with a black course.
2. He is (like) the brightening thunder abiding in the luminous realm, the youngest one with his unaging, ever-roaring (flames),
   the pure one, the latest fire of many, who travels along many broad expanses as he devours.
3. Sped by the wind, your flaming beams, o flaming Agni, spread out wide asunder.
   Powerfully destructive, (like) the heavenly Navagvas, they conquer the woods, breaking them boldly—
4. Your flaming flames, o possessor of flame, which shear the earth—(flames) like unharnessed horses.
   Then your flickering radiates forth widely, marshaling itself on the back of the dappled one [=earth].
5. Then the tongue of the bull keeps flying forth, like a cattle-raider's missile let loose.
   Like the onslaught of a champion is the ardor of Agni. The fearsome one, difficult to obstruct, fragments the woods.

6. With the radiance of the great goad [=sun] you stretch across the earthly expanses boldly.
   Thrust away fears with your strengths; rapaciously grind down the rapacious rivals.
7. O bright one with bright dominion—(that which is) bright, brightest, showing brightly to us, conferring vigor:
   wealth, glittering, lofty, conferring many heroes—o glittering one, with your glittering (flames) bind (that) to the singer.

VI.7 (448) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6–7

The hymn is dedicated to Agni as Vaiśvānara ("belonging to all men"), but the focus is primarily on his relationship with the gods (see, e.g., vss. 1–2, 4), on his cosmic reach and cosmogonic powers (see, e.g., vss. 1, 5–7), in which aspect he is identified with the sun (see esp. vs. 5), and, especially, on his birth: the root *jan* "beget/be born" is found in each of the first five verses. It is only verse 3 that depicts Agni's relationship with mortals.

1. The head of heaven, the spoked wheel of the earth, Agni Vaiśvānara, born in truth,
   sage poet, sovereign king, guest of the peoples—as a drinking cup to their mouth did the gods beget (him).
2. Navel of sacrifices, seat of riches, the great watering trough—toward (him) did they cry out together.
   Vaiśvānara, charioteer of the ceremonies, beacon of the sacrifice—(him) the gods begot.
3. From you is born the inspired poet who wins the prize, o Agni; from you the heroes vanquishing hostility.
   O Vaiśvānara, establish in us goods to be craved, o king.
4. Toward you, o immortal one, while you are being born, do all the gods cry out together as if to their young.
   According to your intentions they went to immortality, o Vaiśvānara, when you came to light in your two parents [=kindling sticks].
5. Vaiśvānara Agni, these great commandments of yours no one dares venture against,
   since, while (just) being born in the lap of your parents, you found the beacon of the days in the (ritual) patterns.
6. By the eye of Vaiśvānara have the backs of heaven been measured out, by the beacon of the immortal one.
   On his head alone are all the creatures; like twigs have his seven outgrowths [?] grown.

7. He, the very resolute one, who measured out the dusky spaces, (measured) out the luminous realms of heaven—the sage poet Vaiśvānara—
   who extends himself around all creatures, he is the undeceivable herdsman, the protector of the immortal.

VI.8 (449) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7

Another Vaiśvānara hymn, and the cosmic aspects of Agni (and his double, the Sun), extensively treated in VI.7, are touched upon (vss. 2–3). Verse 1 strongly establishes a sacrificial context, however, which returns in verse 4, relating the primal establishment of the ritual fire. The remaining verses (5–7) beg him for benefits.

The hymn is also structured by a phonetic figure, the constant repetition of initial *v*- (see, e.g., 2c, 3a, 3c, all beginning with the preverb *ví*), indexing the epithet *vaiśvānara*, a form of which occurs in every verse but 5.

1. Of the fortifying bull, flame-red, I now proclaim the might, proclaim the rites of Jātavedas.
   For Vaiśvānara a newer thought purifies itself, gleaming like soma, (a thought) dear to Agni.
2. (Even?) while being born in the highest distant heaven, Agni, as protector of commandments [=Varuṇa], guarded the commandments.
   He, the very effective one, measured out the midspace; Vaiśvānara touched the vault with his greatness.
3. He propped apart the two world-halves, as unerring envoy [/Mitra]. He made the darkness pregnant with light.
   He rolled out the two Holy Places [=world-halves] like skins. Vaiśvānara assumed all bullish power.
4. In the lap of the waters the buffaloes grasped (him). The clans reverently approached the king worthy of verses.
   The messenger of Vivasvant brought Agni hither—Mātariśvan (brought) Vaiśvānara from afar.
5. In every generation, o Agni, establish for the singers glorious wealth for ritual distribution and a newer (thought).
   As if with a metal wheel-rim, o unaging king, hew down like a tree the one who curses, with your sharpness.
6. Among our benefactors, o Agni, uphold dominion, unbowed and unaging, and an abundance of heroes.
   May we conquer spoils in hundreds and thousands, o Vaiśvānara Agni, with your help.

7. With your undeceivable herdsmen, o object of our quest, protect our patrons, o triply seated one.
   And guard the troop of those who have given to us, o Agni Vaiśvānara, and extend (their/our lifetime), when you are praised.

VI.9 (450) Agni Vaiśvānara

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

A powerfully enigmatic hymn, in which the poet reflects on the craft of poetry, worries about his ability to practice it, and, on having received the revelation of the mysteries from the ritual fire, takes heart and assumes his poetic vocation. In this progression the hymn is very reminiscent of IV.5, also a hymn to Agni in his Vaiśvānara aspect and one in which a poet receives his poetic inspiration from Agni.

The first and last (7) verses establish a ritual context: the fire is being kindled in the darkness just before daybreak; its light, which dispels the physical darkness, will be configured as the metaphorical light of inspiration in the rest of the hymn. Verses 2–3 are responsive verses, with verse 2 couched in the 1st-person singular voice of the poet. He confesses his lack of knowledge of poetic craft, metaphorically expressed as weaving. The burden is all the greater in that he feels pressure to surpass his father, whose poetic heir he is. On the basis of the second pāda of this verse, many scholars have interpreted the whole hymn as a depiction of a *brahmodya*, a poetic contest among rival poets, but we see no evidence of a formal contest here, simply a poet struggling to find his place as a poet within the bardic tradition.

The response to this verse in verse 3 provides the answer to the poet's perplexity: he will learn his craft if he rightly perceives the ritual fire (who is not mentioned by name). This verse not only provides the answer, but serves as an example of the poet's growing skill, for the last pāda of the verse can be read with double application, both to the poet and to Agni. On the one hand, the repetition of "higher" and "below" from 2cd suggests that the same father-son pair is referred to as there, and that the poet is asserting that he will indeed obtain the upper hand over his father from the revelation of Agni. On the other, the pāda can be read as a riddling definition of the god Agni himself, who "moves about below" on the human plane, but "sees above the other" (perhaps the sun, as another form of fire), because he goes all the way to heaven bearing men's oblations to the gods. Thus, what we translate as " '(He [=the poet] is) the herdsmen of the immortal'—(the son who, though) he moves about below, sees above the other [=his father]" can also be read as "(He [=Agni] is) the herdsmen of the immortal, who, though he moves about below, sees above the other [=sun?]."

That Agni is the object to be rightly perceived, referred to but not named in verse 3, which will confer poetic prowess, is made very clear in verse 4, though again the name Agni does not appear—only unmistakable descriptions of fire. The immediacy of the revelation is underlined by the repeated near-deictic pronoun "here (is)" (a: *ayám*, b: *idám*, c: *ayám*). This anonymous but unambiguous description of Agni is continued in verse 5, where he is the entire focus also of the gods. Also important in verse 5 is the characterization of Agni as "swiftest mind," for it is the mental energy of Agni that the poet is absorbing.

In verse 6 the 1st-person poet returns, and with clear excitement testifies to the new flights of his poetic perception and imagination, matching the swift-flying mind of Agni in verse 5. The "light deposited in my heart" is clearly the light of Agni's inspiration. He ends the verse with questions about what he will now say and think—no longer out of a feeling of powerlessness (as in vs. 2), but a sense of future possibilities. (This difference is also conveyed by a change in verbal tense/mood: in verse 2 he wonders about his speech in the subjunctive mood; here he uses the future tense, conveying certainty.)

The hymn has a neatly structured omphalos shape. Verses 1 and 7 are the ritual frame; verses 2 and 6 contain the contrasting 1st-person self-descriptions of the poet; verses 3 and 5 provide the inner frame, identifying Agni as the object of perception of both gods and men; while verse 4 is the omphalos, with its insistent, deictic revelation of Agni immediately before the poet's (and our) eyes.

1. The black day and the silvery day roll out through the two dusky realms according to their knowing ways.
   Agni Vaiśvānara, (even) while being born, like a king suppressed the dark shades with his light.
2. I do not know the thread, nor know how to weave, nor (know) what the wanderers [=fingers? threads? shuttles?] weave at their meeting.
   Whose son will be able to speak what is to be said here, as someone higher than his father, (who is) below?
3. Just he (knows) the thread; he knows how to weave; he will be able to speak what is to be said in proper order—
   (the one) who will rightly perceive him [=Agni]: "(He [=the poet] is) the herdsmen of the immortal"—(the son who, though) he moves about below, sees above the other [=his father].
4. Here is the foremost Hotar: look at him. Here is the light, immortal among mortals.
   Here was he born, set steadfast down here, immortal, becoming strong through his own body.
5. The steadfast light, set down to be seen—the mind swiftest among (all) those that fly—
   all the gods, of one mind and one perception, come separately straight to (him) as their single resolve.

6. My two ears fly widely, widely my sight, widely this light that was deposited in my heart.
   Widely goes my mind, my intentions at a distance. What shall I say, and what now shall I think?
7. All the gods, in fear, offered homage to you, Agni, while you were (still) standing in the darkness.
   Let Vaiśvānara give help to aid us; let the immortal one give help to aid us.

VI.10 (451) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except dvipadā virāj 7

The sentiments in this hymn are familiar ones: Agni as ritual fire being kindled at the sacrifice, blazing brightly, receiving praise, and bestowing blessings on the poet and his patrons. It is characterized, however, by a subtle strain of deliberately misleading expectations (in part necessarily obscured by translation). On several occasions the audience would automatically assign a referent on the basis of formulaics and context only to discover later in the verse that the assumed reference is wrong. In translation this is most easily seen in verse 3, where the first phrase appears to describe Agni, but it turns out to be instead the poet serving Agni. The beginning of verse 2 belongs to a formula found in a number of places in the R̥gveda that imposes an identification of Agni on the opening demonstrative "that." It is only in the second half of the verse that it becomes clear that the demonstrative instead modifies "praise." The extreme ellipsis of verse 2 contributes to this game of disappointed expectations: two objects in that verse lack overt verbs to govern them.

1. Set in front your gladdening, heavenly Agni, (who receives) well-twisted (hymns), while the sacrifice, the ceremony is proceeding.
   (Set him) in front with solemn words, for he is far-radiant for us. As Jātavedas (he) will perform good ceremonies.
2. That—o heaven-bright Hotar of Manu, o Agni of many faces, on being kindled along with the (other) fires—
   (that) praise (take to yourself) which (I chant) to him forcefully like Mamatā [/in my me-ness]. My thoughts purify themselves like gleaming ghee.
3. That one is swollen with praise among mortals who as inspired poet performs ritual service for Agni with solemn words.
   With brilliant help the one of brilliant flame sets him [=the poet] to the winning of a stable full of cows.
4. He who, (even) while being born, has filled the two wide (world-halves) with his light, visible from afar—(though) his course is black—

so even across the dense darkness of the night the pure one is visible with his flame.

5. Now, Agni, with your help that brings many prizes, establish brilliant wealth for us and for our benefactors—
 those who, by their generosity and fame, surpass the others, and by good heroes en masse dominate the peoples.
6. Eagerly take delight in this sacrifice here, Agni, which the seated one with his oblation offers to you.
 Among the Bharadvājas you have taken to yourself the well-twisted (hymn); aid in the winning of the prize to be secured.
7. Dispel hatreds; increase refreshment. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.11 (452) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verse: triṣṭubh

The insistent emphasis throughout this hymn is on Agni as Hotar priest and sacrificer, who sacrifices both for and to himself.

1. Perform sacrifice yourself as superior sacrificer, o Hotar Agni, when prompted, pressingly as if at the hitching up of the Maruts.
 Here to us you should turn Mitra and Varuṇa, the Nāsatyas, Heaven and Earth to the Hotar-work.
2. You are our most gladdening Hotar, without deceit, god among men through (all) the rites.
 As the conveyor (of oblations) with your mouth, o Agni, with your pure tongue perform sacrifice yourself to your own self.
3. For even the wealthy Holy Place longs for (this) in regard to you, (to put you) forward to sacrifice to the gods, to their races, for the singer,
 when the most inspired of the Aṅgirases, the inspired poet rhythmically speaks his honey, hoarse-voiced in his quest.
4. He has flashed, the very clever, wide-radiant one. O Agni, perform sacrifice yourself to the two world-halves of broad extent—
 (you, Agni,) whom, like Āyu, they anoint with reverence—the five peoples having bestowed oblations (anoint) him who receives the pleasurable offerings.
5. When I twist the ritual grass with reverence beside the fire, the ladle filled with ghee, along with a well-twisted hymn, has (already) been held forth;
 the sitting place (of Agni) has been fastened to the seat of the earth. The sacrifice has been fixed (on him), like (a man's) eye on the sun.

6. Be favorable to us, o Hotar of many faces, along with the gods, on being kindled along with (the other) fires, o Agni.
   O son of strength, clothing ourselves in riches as if in a girthband, may we slip beyond difficult straits.

VI.12 (453) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

As often, the attempt to capture in words the actions of natural fire calls out the best in the poet. The hymn has a skeleton of typical ritual description, especially at the beginning, but this seems a simple and inert structure into which to insert a series of increasingly contorted and fanciful images of fire.

1. In the middle of the dwelling, as Hotar, ruler of the ritual grass, (ruler) of the goad, Agni is to sacrifice to the two world-halves.
   Here is the truthful son of strength spread from afar like the sun, with his flame.
2. You in whom heaven in its entirety [=all the gods] will now perform sacrifice, as it were—you the very clever, the means of sacrifice, the king—
   (you) with your three seats, like the plumage of (a bird) that has traversed (the sky?), are to sacrifice the oblations, the bounties of the sons of Manu.
3. (He) whose (course) is sharpest, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice), the ruler in the wood, like a goad on the (race)course, he has flashed as he grows strong (on the hearths).
   The immortal one appears like an undisguised reaper in person, (moving) without obstruction among the plants.
4. By our fortifying (hymns), Agni like (a horse) at running is praised in the household, as Jātavedas.
   He whose food is wood, winning like a steed with its determination, like a father he is to be woken dawn after dawn by sacrifices.
5. Then they marvel at his light when, carving (the trees) at will, he travels along the earth.
   He who immediately, when unloosened, streams ever faster, like a debtor (turned) thief he has headed straight across the waste places.
6. Do you, o steed, *drive here to us, when you are kindled along with all the (other) fires, o Agni.
   You pursue riches; you drive across misfortunes. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.13 (454) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn stays focused on its theme of Agni as the possessor and distributor of treasures and blessings, and of the mortals who receive these goods through service to Agni.

1. From you, well-portioned one, do all good portions spread out, like branches from a tree—
   at your attentive hearing—wealth, the victory prize at the overcoming of obstacles, rain from heaven, the streaming of waters, (everything that is) to be reverently invoked.
2. You are our Apportioner, for your treasure here is for our refreshment. Like an encompassing (household), you of wondrous luster hold sway (over treasure),
   as Mitra does over lofty truth, o Agni. You, god, are the distributer of an abundance of valuables.
3. That lord of settlements smashes the obstacle with power, o Agni, (that) inspired poet carries the prize away from the niggard,
   whom you, o provident one born of truth, incite with wealth, in concert with the Child of the Waters.
4. The mortal who has achieved the "whetting" of you, o son of strength, through hymns and solemn pronouncements, through sacrifices and the altar,
   he acquires all wealth, according to his wish, o god Agni. He shows mastery through his goods.
5. These (goods) bringing good fame, consisting of good heroes, establish here for men to thrive, o Agni, son of strength,
   since with your power you make an abundance of livestock as vigor (even) for the wolf, for the famished stranger.
6. O Agni, son of strength, eloquent, of extensive power, grant us progeny and posterity and prizewinning (steeds).
   With all my hymns may I attain to fulfillment. – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.14 (455) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except śakvarī 6

Though it begins with friendship, insight, and refreshment (vs. 1), this is a martial hymn, naming Agni as the priest specific to the Ārya (vs. 2) and asking him to give

heroes and victory to the Ārya in their battles with the non-Ārya and to our particular group of Ārya in internal conflicts (vss. 3–5). The hymn is noteworthy in using the metaphor of riches/wealth for an abundance of good fighting men: the phrase "riches of the stranger" in verse 3 refers, in our opinion, to the manpower of the Ārya, and this metaphor is repeated in verse 5.

1. The mortal who (has placed his) friendship in Agni and has savored insight through his insightful thoughts,
   chewing (it [=insight]) now, he should be the first to choose (it as) refreshment, for help.
2. For just Agni is provident; Agni is the seer, the best ritual adept.
   Agni as Hotar do the clans of Manu reverently invoke at the sacrifices.
3. For, o Agni, they [=the clans of Manu], the "riches of the stranger," contend with each other, every man for himself, for (your) help—
   (that is,) the Āyus—(while at the same time) overcoming the Dasyu (and) seeking to vanquish with their commandments the one who follows no commandment.
4. Agni gives a hero winning the waters, vanquishing with his attack, as lord of settlements,
   whose rivals tremble at the full sight of his vast power, in fear.
5. For Agni, the god, through his know-how delivers from scorn (that) mortal
   whose "wealth" is victorious and unobstructible, unobstructible in the prize-contests.
6. O god Agni with the might of Mitra, to us you call the gods, call the grace of the two world-halves.
   Pursue well-being, good dwelling; pursue the men of heaven. May we cross over hatreds, over narrow straits difficult to traverse.
   May we cross over; with your help may we cross over.

VI.15 (456) Agni

Vītahavya Āṅgirasa or Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
19 verses: jagatī 1–2, śakvarī 3, jagatī 4–5, atiśakvarī 6, jagatī 7–9, triṣṭubh 10–14, śakvarī 15, triṣṭubh 16, anuṣṭubh 17, bṛhati 18, triṣṭubh 19, arranged in tṛcas

With its nineteen verses, this hymn as a unity would clearly be out of place in the arrangement of the maṇḍala, but dissolved into a series of five independent tṛcas, its first fifteen verses fit well. The last four verses (16–19) are considered by Oldenberg (1888: 194) to be a later addition, and their vocabulary shows certain signs of comparative modernity.

The content of these triads is generally unremarkable, concentrating on the installation of the ritual fire, Agni's sacrificial role as envoy between gods and men, and the ritual service performed for him by mortals. To some extent the tr̥cas seem to be exercises in variation; for example, the first verses of the first two tr̥cas (1, 4) share some key words and phrases and can in part be interpreted by comparison with each other.

1. This guest of yours here, waking at dawn, lord of all clans will I stretch toward with my hymn.
   He, ablaze right from his birth, pursues any (food) whatever from heaven here. For a long time the embryo eats just what is immovable.
2. Whom the Bhr̥gus installed like a well-installed envoy, to be reverently invoked at the "tree" [=sacrificial post], with flames erect,
   you, o infallible one, well pleased in Vītahavya, are magnified with eulogies every day.
3. You—become a strengthener of our skill, one who keeps the wolf away, an overcomer of the stranger, distant or close.
   O son of strength, (hold out) riches among mortals, hold out shelter of great extent to Vītahavya, of great extent to Bharadvāja.

4. Your flashing guest with his solar glory, Agni, the Hotar conducting good ceremonies for Manu,
   possessing heaven-ruling speech like an inspired poet, the oblation-conveying spoked wheel (of the sacrifice)—to (this) god I stretch with my well-twisted (hymns).
5. Who with his pure, conspicuous body shines on earth as if with the radiance of Dawn,
   who goes in triumph on his course now like the victor in the battle with Etaśa [=the sun's horse], who is athirst (for oblations?) here, like (a traveler) in the (sun's) heat, the unaging one—
6. To your every fire do friendly service with a kindling stick, to your every dear guest in hymning (them).
   Seek to win the immortal one with your hymns, for the god will win what is choice among the gods; for the god will win friendship for us among the gods.

7. Agni kindled with kindling wood do I hymn with a hymn—the blazing pure one in front, steadfast at the ceremony,
   inspired poet, Hotar of many favors, without deceit—the sage poet we beseech with appeals for grace as Jātavedas.
8. You, Agni, have they established in every generation as immortal messenger, as oblation-conveyor, as protector to be reverently invoked.

Both gods and mortals set down with homage the wakeful one as their far-extending clanlord.

9. Seeking manifestation, o Agni, following the commandments of both (men and gods) you speed between the two airy realms altogether.
   Since we choose for ourselves your thought as grace, so become a kindly provider of threefold defense for us.

10. Him, of lovely countenance, of lovely appearance, of lovely outlook, might we, who do not know, serve as the one who knows better.
    He will perform sacrifice, knowing all the patterns; Agni will proclaim our oblation among the immortals.

11. Him, o Agni, do you protect and him do you rescue, who has achieved an insightful thought for you, the sage poet, o champion,
    or (who has achieved) the "whetting" of the sacrifice, or its (proper) outcome. Just him do you imbue with power and with wealth.

12. You, Agni—protect (us) from the rapacious one, and you, mighty one—(protect) us from reproach.
    Let the smoke-enwrapped (oblation) come entirely to you, to the fold (of the gods); let thousandfold desirable wealth (come) entirely.

13. Agni is the Hotar, the houselord; he is the king. He knows all the creatures, as Jātavedas.
    He who is of gods and of mortals the best sacrificer, let him, the truthful one, set the sacrifice in motion.

14. O Agni, pure-flamed Hotar of the ceremony, when today you pursue (the oblations) of the clan—for you are the sacrificer—
    you will offer true (hymns?) as sacrifice when you have become manifest in your greatness. O youngest one, convey the oblations that are yours today.

15. For you watch over the well-placed pleasurable offerings then. One should set you down, to sacrifice to the two world-halves.
    Help us, bounteous one, in the winning of prizes. Agni, may we cross over all (narrow straits) difficult to traverse; may we cross over them—with your help may we cross over.

16. O Agni of the lovely face, with all the gods sit first on the woolly womb,
    the ghee-rich one that forms a nest. Lead the sacrifice straight, for the impeller (of the sacrificer), for the sacrificer.

17. This Agni here the ritual adepts churn, as Atharvan (did)—
    (Agni) who, (though) he sought a crooked (path), they led here unerring from the dark (places).

18. Be born, to pursue the gods in their entirety, for well-being.

Convey the gods hither, the immortals growing strong through truth.
You cause the sacrifice to touch the gods.

19. O Agni, houselord of the people(s), we have made you lofty with kindling wood.
May our household (arrangements) not be "one-horse." With your sharp sharpness hone us thoroughly.

VI.16 (457) Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
48 verses: gāyatrī, except vardhamānā 1, 6, anuṣṭubh 27, 47–48, triṣṭubh 46, arranged in tr̥cas

This lengthy hymn must, like the last one (VI.15), be dissolved into tr̥cas in order to fit the numerical arrangement of the maṇḍala. As Proferes (2007: 9) points out, this is an assemblage of Bharadvāja kindling verses, similar to the collections made by the Vaiśvāmitras (III.27) and the Atris (V.28), likewise placed at or near the end of their Agni cycle. Again, the content stays primarily focused on the ritual aspects of Agni. Personal and family names are found fairly commonly (see especially the second [vss. 4–6, and cf. vs. 19] and fifth [vss. 13–15] tr̥cas). There are overt signs of unity within some of the tr̥cas: for instance, both the second (vss. 4–6) and the third tr̥cas (vss. 7–9) begin each verse with a form of "you"; a variant of this is found in the fifth tr̥ca (vss. 13–15).

1. You, Agni, were established as Hotar of all sacrifices
by the gods for the human race.
2. With your gladdening tongues sacrifice for us to the great ones in the course of the ceremony.
Convey the gods hither and sacrifice,
3. For you, o ritual adept, know the ways and the paths in their straight course,
o strong-willed god Agni, very effective at the sacrifices.

4. You does Bharata, along with his prizewinners, reverently invoke, now yet again, for blessing.
He has sacrificed to the sacrificial one at the sacrifices.
5. You—(give) these many valuables to Divodāsa the (soma) presser,
to Bharadvāja the pious.
6. You, as immortal messenger—convey the divine race hither,
when you hear the lovely praise of the inspired poet.

7. You, Agni, do the very attentive mortals reverently invoke as god at the sacrifices,
to pursue the gods.

8. Begin the sacrifice: your manifestation and your resolve do those of good drops,
the desirous ones, all take pleasure in.
9. You are the Hotar established by Manu, the conveyor (of oblations) with your mouth, the very wise one.
Agni, sacrifice to the clans of heaven.

10. Agni, being hymned, travel hither to pursue (the oblations), to give the oblations.
Sit down as Hotar on the ritual grass.
11. You, Aṅgiras, with kindling sticks, with ghee do we strengthen.
Blaze aloft, youngest one.
12. You seek to win for us here a broad, praiseworthy,
lofty mass of heroes, god Agni.

13. You, Agni, did Atharvan churn forth from the lotus,
(did) the liturgists (churn) from the head of the whole (world?).
14. You did Dadhyañc, the seer, son of Atharvan, kindle
as obstacle-smasher, stronghold-splitter.
15. You did Vr̥ṣan Pāthya kindle as best Dasyu-smasher,
winning the stakes in every battle.

16. Come here. I will speak to you, Agni, in this way: "(There are) other hymns,
but with these drops here you will become strong."
17. Wherever your mind is (set), (there) you will set your skill next,
there you will make your seat.
18. Since what is granted to you will not be (just) a speck, you good one, who are on (our) side,
therefore you will win (us) friendship.

19. Agni has come here, the one belonging to the Bharatas, obstacle-smasher, manifest to many,
lord of the settlements of Divodāsa.
20. For he will piously offer wealth beyond all earthly (goods) by his greatness,
winning (though) himself unwon, indestructible.
21. O Agni, as of old but anew, with lasting brilliance
you stretch aloft with your radiance.

22. Comrades, boldly chant forth to Agni your praise and sacrifice
and sing to the ritual adept.
23. For he is the one who has sat through the human (life)spans as Hotar with a poet's purpose,
and as the messenger conveying the oblations.

24. To the two kings of blazing commandments [=Mitra and Varuṇa], the Ādityas, the Marutian flock,
    o good one, sacrifice here, and to the two world-halves.

25. Good is your manifestation, Agni, for the prospering mortal—
    (the manifestation) of (you) the immortal, o child of nourishment.
26. Acccording to your will let the giver be best off, winning you today, acquiring a good legacy.
    The mortal has achieved a (hymn) with a good twist.
27. Those aided by you, Agni, (are ones) prospering through their whole lifetime,
    overcoming the hostilities of the stranger, vanquishing the hostilities of the stranger.

28. Agni with his sharp flame will run down every rapacious one.
    Agni will win us wealth.
29. Wealth in good heroes bring here, o unbounded Jātavedas.
    Smash the demonic forces, o you of good resolve.
30. You—protect us from narrow straits, o Jātavedas, from the one who bears malice.
    Guard us, o poet of the sacred formulation.

31. The mortal of evil ways who will deliver us to the murderous weapon, o Agni,
    from him protect us and from narrow straits.
32. You, god—deflect with your tongue that evil-doer,
    the mortal who wishes to smash us.
33. To Bharadvāja hold out shelter of great extent,
    o overpowering Agni, and goods worthy to be chosen.

34. Agni will keep smashing obstacles, seeking chattels, amid admiration—
    kindled, blazing when bepoured (with ghee)—
35. In the womb of his mother, as the father of his father, having flashed forth at the imperishable (syllable?),
    sitting on the birthplace of truth—
36. Bring here a sacred formulation bestowing offspring, o unbounded Jātavedas,
    o Agni, (a formulation) that will shine in heaven.

37. Toward you of delightful appearance, have we, affording (you) pleasure,
    released our songs, o might-made Agni.
38. Toward your shelter we have come, as if into shadow from the (sun's) heat,
    o Agni of golden appearance—

39. You who, like a powerful sharpshooter, like a sharp-horned buffalo,
 have broken strongholds, o Agni.

40. Whom they carry like a bangle on the hand, like an infant just born,
 Agni, who conducts good ceremonies for the clans,
41. (That) god carry forward, to pursue the gods, (him) the best finder of goods.
 Let him sit down on his own birthplace.
42. "Whet" the dear guest, just born on (the old fire) Jātavedas,
 the houselord in his comfortable (birth)place.

43. God Agni, yoke (them) then!—those horses of yours that go straight to their goal,
 that convey (the gods) in accord with your fervor.
44. Drive here to us. Convey (the gods) here to the pleasurable offerings, to pursue (them).
 (Convey) the gods here to drink the soma.
45. O Agni belonging to the Bharatas, constantly flashing brilliantly upward with your inexhaustible (flame),
 blaze, radiate widely, unaging one.

46. The mortal who with pursuit would seek friendship with the god, he, offering oblations at the ceremony, should reverently invoke Agni.
 With outstretched hands he should seek to win with homage the Hotar whose sacrifice comes true in the two world-halves.
47. Here to you, Agni, we bring with a verse an oblation fashioned by our heart:
 let the oxen, bulls, and mated cows be yours.
48. Agni do the gods kindle at the front, as the best obstacle-smasher
 by whom goods are brought here and the demonic powers crushed—by the prizewinner.

VI.17 (458) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except dvipadā 15

This hymn is divided into two roughly equal parts, with the first devoted to the Vala myth (vss. 2–6), the second to the Vṛtra myth (vss. 8–12). The first verse announces these two themes in order, allotting each a half-verse. The two mythic segments are separated by a verse about Indra's general cosmogonic deeds (7); the last three verses (13–15) urge Indra to use the same powers to help the poet and his patrons.

The account of both narratives emphasizes the role of soma in rousing Indra to his great deeds, and the hymn begins with three verses (1–3) with the insistent imperative "drink!" The Vala myth is in fact configured as a model for Indra's behavior in the present with the mythic deeds presented as still to happen: he is enjoined to drill through to the cattle pen (vss. 2, 3) and to disclose the sun (vs. 3). The hymn thus appears to be associated with the activities at dawn. The Vr̥tra myth is more consistently presented as a deed in the past (though see vss. 8, 11).

1. Drink the soma! The cattle enclosure that you will drill through to,
   mighty Indra, when you are greatly sung—
   you bold mace-bearer, who will hew apart Vr̥tra and all hostile things
   with your powers—
2. Drink it! You who are the victorious possessor of the silvery drink, who
   are the belipped, who are the bull of poetic thoughts,
   who are the cowpen-splitter, the mace-bearer, who are the mounter of
   fallow bays, you, Indra—drill through to the shimmering prizes.
3. Drink it in just this way, as of old. Let it exhilarate you. Hear our sacred
   formulation, and grow strong through our songs.
   Disclose the sun, swell refreshments, and smash rivals. Indra, drill
   through to the cows.
4. The exhilarating drinks here, when drunk, make you grow loftily
   brilliant, o autonomous Indra;
   the invigorating drinks continually excite (you who are) great, without
   deficiency, powerful, distinguished, conquering—
5. Becoming exhilarated on which, you made the sun and dawn to shine, as
   you shattered the strongholds.
   You shoved the great, immoveable rock that was enclosing the cattle
   from its own seat, Indra.
6. Through your will and your wondrous skills you secured the cooked
   (milk) in the raw (cows) by your ability.
   You opened the doors, opened up the strongholds for the dawn-red ones.
   Accompanied by the Aṅgirases, you sent the cows surging up from the
   enclosure.
7. You filled the earth broad and wide—great is your wondrous skill.
   Towering, you propped up heaven aloft, Indra.
   You fixed fast the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods, the two
   ancient but youthfully exuberant mothers of truth.
8. Then all the gods set you in front alone, o Indra, as the powerful one to
   "carry (the day)."
   When the non-god has vaunted himself to the gods, they choose Indra
   here at the winning of the sun.

9. Then even Heaven, she [=Earth] likewise also, bent away from your mace, through fear of your own battle fury,
   when Indra struck down the vaunting serpent to lie there for a full lifespan.
10. Then Tvaṣṭar turned the mace with its thousand spikes and hundred edges for you who are great, o powerful one,
   that eager, devoted (mace) with which you utterly crushed the screaming serpent, you possessor of the silvery drink.
11. (You) whom all the Maruts in concert will strengthen, for you, Indra, he [=Agni] cooks a hundred buffaloes.
   Pūṣan, Viṣṇu (and the others) rinse the exhilarating Vṛtra-smashing plant, three lakes (full), for him.
12. You sent surging here the great gush of rivers that had been blocked and surrounded, the wave of waters.
   Along their slopes, along their path, Indra, you set the busy (waters) tossing, downward to the sea.
13. Indra having done all these things in just this way, the great, mighty, ageless giver of strength,
   possessing good heroes, good weapons, and a good mace—you—might our new sacred formulation turn here for help.
14. Provide our inspired poets with brilliance—for (them to acquire) the prize: fame and refreshment, and wealth, o Indra;
   at Bharadvāja's (provide) our patrons with superior men, o Indra. And, as ever, be there for us, Indra, on the decisive day.
15. With this (hymn) might we win the prize established by the gods.
   – Having good heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.18 (459) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn seems to be aiming to deploy as many different words for power, might, strength, and so forth in as many different derivational forms as possible. The sheer power of Indra, thus expressed, overshadows his particular deeds, which are mentioned in a somewhat cursory way: Vala (vs. 5), Vṛtra (vs. 6, also 9 and 14), the destruction of various named monsters (vs. 8). The poet is also fond of figures involving a positive and a twist on its negation: "vanquishing but unvanquished" (vs. 1), and so forth.

This focus on Indra's power betrays some nervous worry about the existence of that power, expressed especially in the rhetorical question and answer in verses 3–4. A number of hymns in the Ṛgveda raise the question of whether Indra himself

exists; here the existential anxiety has been displaced to an abstract entity, his might, but the poet asserts its existence so often and so unequivocally that his audience can scarcely doubt it. Needless to say, the recital of Indra's strength is not disinterested: the poet calls for Indra to use his powers in defense of the poet's people and, in the last verse (15), to perform the deed that *exists* for him to do (a nice return to the existential theme), in order to merit another poem from the poet.

1. Praise him whose might is overpowering, the vanquishing but unvanquished, much-summoned Indra.
   Mighty, conquering but unconquered, the bull of the settled domains—strengthen him with these songs.
2. He—the fighting warrior, creator of tumult, combat-hardened, the powerfully destructive, bellowing partaker of the silvery drink,
   with high-mounting dust—alone became the victorious rouser of the communities of the sons of Manu.
3. It was just you who tamed the Dasyus, and who alone vanquished (their) communities for the Ārya.
   Does that heroic power now exist for you, Indra, or does it not? You will announce that at the proper season.
4. It certainly does exist for you!—so I think: strength, o strongest one, (has come) to you, who were powerfully born, the surpassing surpasser—
   mighty (strength) has come to the mighty one, more powerful (strength) to the powerful one who, himself not feeble, furthers the feeble.
5. "Let our age-old partnership with you (all) (still) exist," with the Aṅgirases speaking in just this way—along with them
   you smashed the prospering Vala cave, o wondrous shaker of the unshakable, and you opened its strongholds and its doors, all of them.
6. He is to be summoned with insightful thoughts—the mighty one who performs the master's part in the great overcoming of Vr̥tra,
   in the winning of progeny, in (the winning of) posterity. As the mace-bearer he became worth tussling for in battles.
7. Through his greatness and his immortal name he has extended himself over the races of the sons of Manu.
   He is at home with brilliance and with power and wealth, and he, the best of men, with heroism—
8. He, the man who is not to be confused and is not wrong, bearing a name that is good to think upon. Cumuri and Dhuni
   did Indra wring out, and Pipru, Śambara, and Śuṣṇa—to shake their strongholds and for (them) to lie there even now.
9. With your helpful energy, (ever) more to be admired, up and mount your chariot, Indra, for the Vr̥tra-smashing.
   Place your mace in your hand on the right side. Stimulate your magical powers, o you who give much.

10. As fire does dry wood, like a terrifying missile burn down the demon with your lance, o Indra.
    He who shattered the obstacles to progress with a (lance) both deep and high, he smoked them out and subjugated them.
11. Along a thousand paths affording powerful prizes, o powerfully brilliant Indra, drive here in our direction with wealth,
    o much summoned son of strength, whom a godless man never has the power to repel.
12. The greatness of the powerfully brilliant, stalwart, ardent one has overflowed from heaven and earth.
    There exists no rival for him, nor counterpart, no opponent for the strong one with many magical powers.
13. This deed done by you stands out today—that for his sake [=Tūrvayāṇa's?] (you ground down) Kutsa, Āyu, and Atithigva;
    many thousands did you grind down to earth. You led Tūrvayāṇa up boldly.
14. Then, o god, all the gods cheer you on for the serpent-smashing, (you) the best poet of poets,
    when you will create wide space for oppressed heaven, for its people and for yourself as you are being sung.
15. Heaven and Earth and the immortal gods give way to your might, Indra.
    Do, o doer, what undone (deed) exists for you (to do). Generate a newer hymn for yourself along with sacrifices.

VI.19 (460) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one exults in the mighty powers of Indra and in the rich lexicon that describes them, although it is perhaps somewhat less insistent (but see vs. 6ab). Also as in VI.18 the poet exhorts Indra to put his powers to good use for the men associated with the poet. The three middle verses (6–8) all contain the phrase "bring here to us," each with a different abstract power as object, and the remaining verses continue these requests for aid and support, especially in defeating enemies and rivals.

1. Great is Indra—manful, filling the domains and doubly lofty, undiminishing in his powers.
   Inclined toward us, he has been strengthened for his heroic deed. Wide and broad, he was well made by his makers.

2. The Holy Place positioned just Indra for winning, him lofty and towering, unaging and youthful,
   swollen with invincible strength, who in just a single day grew strong and not by halves.
3. Broad are your forearms, ample your fists. Mete out full measures of fame in our direction.
   Like a herdsman to his flocks of livestock, as household master, o Indra, turn here to us in the contest.
4. Striving for the prizes of victory here and now, we would summon him for you, the elusive Indra along with his able (men);
   (might we be) irreproachable, blameless, and invulnerable, just as the ancient singers were.
5. Of steadfast commandment, giving spoils, strengthened by soma (is he), for he is the possessor of much livestock, of goods worth winning.
   The paths of wealth have joined in him, like the rivers uniting in the sea.
6. Bring here to us, o overpowering champion, the strongest strength, the mightiest mighty might.
   All things brilliant and bullish that belong to the sons of Manu—give them to us, o master of the fallow bays, to exhilarate us.
7. Your exhilaration, conquering in battle, never shirking—bring us that, swollen with strength, o Indra,
   through which we could be considered victors in the winning of progeny and posterity, aided by you.
8. Bring here to us, Indra, the bullish unbridled force that gains the stakes, swollen with strength, of good skill,
   through which we will vanquish our rivals in battles, both kin and non-kin, with your help.
9. Let your unbridled force, a bull, come here from behind, here from above and below, here from in front.
   Let it come altogether toward us from all sides. Indra, grant to us sun-like brilliance.
10. Manfully, with your most manly help, Indra, we would win what is worth winning through your attentions.
    Because you are master of both kinds of good, o king, grant a great, substantial, lofty treasure.
11. Him, accompanied by the Maruts, the bull grown strong, not stingy, the heavenly commander—Indra—
    the all-conquering, mighty giver of strength—him we would invoke here for present help.
12. The person who thinks himself to be ever so great, o mace-bearer—make him subject to these superior men, among whom am I—
    for therefore do we summon you at the contest of champions when the earth, lineage, cows, and waters (are at stake).

13. By these partnerships with you, o much invoked one, might we be
    higher than each and every rival.
  Smashing both kinds of obstacles, o champion, we would be exultant
    through lofty wealth, when helped by you.

VI.20 (461) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
13 verses: triṣṭubh, except virāj 7

Unlike the usual model, this hymn *begins* with the prayer for gifts from the god (vs. 1). But most of the rest of the hymn is devoted to a verse-by-verse listing of Indra's great deeds, not only the standard Vṛtra (vs. 2) and Vala (vss. 3–4) tales, but also the defeat of a series of named enemies on behalf of named mortal clients. Some of these stories are familiar (the Śuṣṇa/Kutsa story, vss. 4–5, and the stealing of Namuci's head, vs. 6), and some are mentioned much more rarely (e.g., Vetasu and Tuji, vs. 8), with unclear details. Many of these same stories are also treated in VI.26.

1. O Indra, wealth that in its vast power surmounts (the wealth) of the
    stranger, (namely) the peoples in battles, as heaven does the earth,
  that brings thousands as plunder, wins fertile fields, and overcomes
    obstacles—give that (wealth) to us, o son of strength.
2. All lordly power, like (that) of heaven, was entirely ceded to you by the
    gods, o Indra,
  when you, accompanied by Viṣṇu, smashed the serpent Vṛtra, who had
    obstructed the waters, you possessor of the silvery drink.
3. Overpowering, mightier and stronger than the strong, he for whom the
    sacred formulation is created, whose greatness increased—Indra
  became king of the somian honey when he aided the splitting of all the
    strongholds.
4. The Paṇis were felled here by hundreds (of deadly weapons), o Indra, for
    the sake of the ten-armed poet at the winning of the (sun's) rays;
  by the deadly weapons the magic powers of the voracious Śuṣṇa (were
    felled). Nothing at all had he left over from the meal.
5. A whole lifetime of great deception was set aside when Śuṣṇa was felled
    at the flying of the mace.
  Sharing the same chariot, Indra made a wide way for Kutsa, the sharer
    of his chariot, at the winning of the sun.
6. Like the falcon stealing the exhilarating plant for him, he, stealing the
    head of the Dāsa Namuci,
  helped Namī Sāpya as he slept. He imbued (him) with wealth, with
    refreshment, and with well-being.

7. You split open the fortified strongholds of Pipru, who had the tricks of a snake, o mace-bearer, as if with swelling strength.
   O generous giver, you gave that legacy not to be spurned as a gift to the pious Ṛjiśvan.
8. Indra showed the favor of his dominance to Vetasu of the ten tricks and ten arms and to the thrusting (Tuji), (saying,)
   "Tugra as perpetual vassal for brilliant (Vetasu) shall I dispatch, like (calves) to their mother, to go (to him)."
9. Unopposable, he will vanquish the contenders, bearing his Vṛtra-smashing mace in his fist.
   He mounts his two fallow bays, like an archer upon his chariot seat; those yoked by speech convey lofty Indra.
10. Might we win anew through your help, Indra. The Pūrus start up the praise with this (hymn) along with sacrifices.
    When he split the seven autumnal strongholds, their shelter, he smote the Dāsa (clans), doing his best for Purukutsa.
11. You, Indra, became the first strengthener. Making wide space for Uśanā Kāvya,
    (to him as?) grandfather you handed over Navavāstu, who was to be delivered up, as his own grandson.
12. You, the tumultuous one, Indra, set the tumultuous waters in motion, flowing like streams.
    When you will cross the sea, o hero, make Turvaśa and Yadu cross to well-being.
13. Everything in the contest is yours, Indra. Dhuni and Cumuri sleep, whom you put to sleep.
    Just he will shine: Dabhīti who presses for you with the soma juices, who brings the firewood and the cooked food, along with the chants.

VI.21 (462) Indra (1–8, 10, 12), All Gods (9, 11)

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The first pāda of this hymn introduces one of its major concerns: the relationship between the current poet and the generations of previous poets to whose lineage he belongs and the question of whether Indra will pay the same attention to the current poet as he did to the older ones (see also vss. 4–6, 8, 10). This theme is connected to the common worry about whether Indra himself exists and, if so, where—subtly articulated in verses 2 and 4, and triumphantly refuted in the last pāda of verse 10. The themes are connected by the anxiety about Indra's epiphany (see esp. vs. 4). Since the goal of the soma sacrifice is to produce Indra's epiphany, that is, his appearance at *our* ritual ground, then his absence may result either from

his favoring another group of sacrificers and poets or from the fact that he doesn't exist at all!

1. These insights of this latest of many bards, (insights) deserving to invoke, newly invoke
you who deserve invoking, o hero, the unaging chariot-mounter.
Extensive wealth is sped by their eloquence.
2. I will praise him who is known as "Indra," whose vehicle is songs, who is strengthened by sacrifice along with songs,
him of many wiles, whose greatness projects beyond heaven and earth in their greatness.
3. Just he made the patternless darkness in its extension to be patterned by the sun.
When do mortals, seeking gain, not violate the ordinances that belong to you, the immortal, o autonomous one?
4. He who did these things, where then is he—this "Indra"? Upon what people does he attend? Among which clans?
What sacrifice is weal for your thought, your wish? What chant, Indra? Which one is your Hotar?
5. For up to now they have been ever toiling for you, o doer of many (deeds)—those who were born long ago, your ancient comrades,
those in between, and the current ones. Much-invoked one, take cognizance of the one who is closest.
6. The closer ones, asking about him, have guided themselves following your distant, ancient (acts) worthy of fame, Indra.
As far as we know it, that far we chant to you as the great one, you hero with the sacred formulation as your vehicle.
7. The face of the demon has spread out against you, who were born great. Stand up to it well!
With your ancient, conjoined comrade, your mace, o bold one, thrust these away.
8. Listen, Indra, to the current (bard) creating sacred formulations, you hero who give succor to bards—
for you, as the friend of our ancestors in olden days, have always been easy to invoke in the quest.
9. Bring forward for help Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra, and the Maruts, to help us today,
forward Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Agni and Plenty, Savitar, the plants, and the mountains.
10. These singers here with their chants chant to you, o you of many talents, receiving the first of the sacrifice.
Listen to the call of him who calls you here as you are called. Immortal one, there exists no one like you, other than you.

11. Now drive here, right up to my speech, since you know, o son of strength, together with all those worthy of the sacrifice,
    who had Agni as their tongue and served the truth, who put Manu very close to Dasa.
12. Become a leader for us on easy roads and on difficult ones, since you are known as a path-maker.
    The broad, unflagging (horses), the best conveyors—with them convey the prize to us, o Indra.

VI.22 (463) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one compares the current poet to previous generations of poets (see vss. 2, 4, 7) and asks Indra directly what in the sacrifice might please him (vs. 4 [cf. VI.21.4]). In fact, the same phrase is used in both hymns to introduce other questions: VI.21.6 *tám pr̥chántaḥ* "(the singers) asking about him" and VI.22.5 *tám pr̥chántī* "(the song) asking about him." In each case the subject (singers or song) seeks information about ways to make contact and find favor with Indra, though the anxiety seems less in this hymn than in VI.21.

The similarities between VI.21 and 22 extend to their final verses. The exhortation to come here with his teams in VI.22.11 is structurally and semantically, though not lexically, parallel to two halves of the two final verses of VI.21, 11ab and 12cd—an interesting example of how a poet can expand an underlying formulaic sequence by inserting new material.

Otherwise, the hymn alternates verses praising Indra's qualities and deeds in list-like fashion (e.g., vss. 1cd, 2cd) and begging him for wealth and martial help (e.g., vss. 3, 8, 10). Stylistically it is noteworthy that in much of the hymn, particularly at the beginning, the initial word of every half-verse refers to Indra (1a, c; 2a, c; 3a; 5a, c; 7a, c; 11a). In 3c, the first half-verse in the hymn *not* beginning with a word referring to Indra, the poet tricks us by playing on our expectations: the *yáḥ* "who" could easily be Indra, as it was earlier (see 1a, c), but in fact has a different referent. The most complex verse syntactically is verse 5, which is perhaps fitting, as it describes the poet's own song.

1. To him who alone is to be called by the separate peoples, to Indra chant with these hymns,
   to the bull with bull-like strength who is master, the real "real thing" with many magic wiles, mighty.
2. To him (chanted) our earlier ancestors, the Navagvas, the seven inspired poets, inciting (him),

to him who catches up to the cheat, the surpassing one who stays on the mountains, whose speech is without deception, to the strongest one, with their thoughts.

3. This Indra do we beseech for his wealth, consisting of many heroes, of superior men, of much livestock,
which is not stunted, not aging, and is filled with sunlight. O master of the fallow bays, bring that here to elate (us).

4. Will you declare this to us—whether ever before singers have obtained your favor, Indra?
What is your portion? What is the vital energy that belongs to a smasher of (rival) lords, you headstrong hammer-head, invoked by many, bringing many goods?

5. The quivering, surging (song), asking about him whose hand holds the mace, who stands upon the chariot—about Indra, whose song it is—
(him who is) powerfully grasping, powerfully ranging, taking on wild frenzy—(the song) seeks her way; she catches up to the bulging one [=Indra].

6. With this magic power (of yours), with the mountain [=mace] that has the speed of thought (you shattered) him who had grown strong through his magic power, you self-powerful one.
You boldly shattered even the immovable, firm fastnesses, o you of good might who confer abundance.

7. (It is) for you [=poets] to tug at him, the strongest one, from every direction with a newer insight, him the ancient one as the ancients did.
Indra, who is without measure, the good conveyor, will convey us across all difficult depths.

8. You set ablaze the earthly and heavenly (realms) and the midspaces against the deceitful people.
Scorch them on every side with your flame, o bull. Enflame the earth and waters against the hater of the sacred formulation.

9. You become the king of the heavenly folk and of the earthly, moving world, o you of glittering face.
Set your mace in your right hand, Indra. Unaging one, you fragment all magic wiles.

10. (Set) here uninterrupted well-being for us, lofty and not negligible, for us to overcome our rivals, Indra,
(well-being) by which you will make the Dāsa and Ārya obstacles easy to thrust away, o mace-bearer, and those from the Nahuṣas.

11. Come here to us with the teams that bring all desirable things, you ritual adept summoned by many, you who receive the first of the sacrifice.
(The teams) that neither a non-god nor a god will hinder, with them drive here swiftly in my direction.

VI.23 (464) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn focuses on Indra's vital connection with soma and on the reciprocal relationship between the soma-presser and Indra, the soma-drinker. This theme is established in the first pāda of the first verse, and every subsequent verse has some reference to soma: all but verse 8 contain a form of the word *sóma* (and vs. 8 does make clear reference to soma-induced exhilaration), and of those, all but verse 7 have "pressed," "pressing," or "presser" as well. The other ritual aspects of the soma sacrifice, especially the poetry and sacred formulations, also receive frequent mention. The reminders to Indra that sacrificial labor should be requited with gifts and help from the god occur throughout the hymn, but are not annoyingly obtrusive.

Stylistically the hymn is noteworthy for its pairs of syntactically linked verses: 1–2 with their "or when" clauses; 3–4 with their run of agent nouns governing accusative objects; 5–6 with a number of repeated formulae.

1. You are intertwined in the pressed soma, Indra, and in the praise song, in the sacred formulation, and in solemn speech as it is recited,
 when, bounteous one, you drive with your two yoked fallow bays, bearing your mace in your arms,
2. Or when on the decisive day, Indra, you help the soma-presser in the smiting of obstacles [/Vr̥tra] and at the contest of champions,
 or when, (yourself) being unafraid, as their skill became fearful, you subdued the vaunting Dasyus, Indra.
3. Let Indra be the drinker of the pressed soma, the mighty one ever leading the singer forward with his help,
 the maker of wide space for the hero and the soma-presser, the giver of goods to his praiser, even a feeble one,
4. Going to even such pressings as these with his two fallow bays, bearing his mace, drinking soma, giving cows,
 who makes the manly hero possessed of hale heroes, the hearer of the singer's call, for praise songs are his vehicle.
5. It is for him that we toil at what he holds dear—for Indra, who has performed labor for us from of old.
 When the soma is pressed, we sing praise; (a priest) recites the solemn words, so that the sacred formulation will be strengthening for Indra.
6. For you have made the sacred formulations strengthening for yourself, to the extent that we have toiled for you, Indra, with our thoughts.
 When the soma is pressed, o soma-drinker, might we make (the pressings/the formulations) to be most wealful, enjoyable means of increase (for you) through our sacrifices.

7. As giver, take notice of our offering cake; drink the soma, foamy with cows [=milk], Indra.
   Sit right here on the ritual grass of the sacrificer. Make wide, wide space for him in devoted pursuit of you.
8. Find elation according to your liking, mighty one. Let these sacrifices reach you.
   Let these calls among us (reach) the one called by many. Might this insightful thought guide you here for help, Indra.
9. So that he (will be) together with you at the pressings, comrades, fill him with soma juices, Indra the benefactor.
   Surely he will be there for us for the taking? Indra will not neglect the soma-presser, not neglect to help him.
10. Just in this way, when the soma is pressed, Indra has been praised among the Bharadvājas. Just he has power over the liberal man,
    so that he [=liberal man] will be a patron to the singer. Indra is a giver of wealth that brings all desirable things.

VI.24 (465) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn begins, like the last one, with a strong statement of Indra's relationship with soma, but it then turns to more general praises of the god (vss. 2–8), with some striking similes, metaphors, and etymological figures. The importance of mortal praise and worship for maintaining Indra's powers is not forgotten; see verses 7–8 and especially verse 6, which seems to concern the traffic in praise: inspiration going out from Indra to the poets and then returning to him as praise (for a similar sentiment and phraseology, see VI.34.1). The last two verses (9–10) ask for Indra's gifts and protection.

1. Bullish exuberance, noise, and solemn words are in Indra; he is the drinker of the pressings and in possession of the silvery drink, when the soma juices are in his company.
   He is worthy to be chanted by men with solemn words as the bounteous one, the heaven-ruling king of hymns, whose help is imperishable.
2. The surpassing hero, favorable to men, discriminating, the hearer of the singer's call, whose help is wide-ranging,
   the good one, the Laud of Men, who gives succor to bards, praised as the prizewinner, he gives the prize at the rite of distribution.
3. Like an axle beyond its two wheels, your lofty (greatness), o champion, projects beyond the two worlds in their greatness.

(Like) the branches of a tree, your forms of help have grown outward,
o much-invoked Indra.

4. The abilities that belong to you, the able one, o you of many abilities,
are converging like streams of cattle.
(They are) like cords for calves, Indra, binding without bonds, o you of
good bonds [/gifts].

5. One deed today and another tomorrow, one which is not and another
which is—Indra makes (them) happen in an instant.
Mitra and Varuṇa, also Pūṣan, are there for us, but it is he [=Indra] who
keeps the will of the stranger contained.

6. Like waters forth from the back of a mountain, they proceeded forth
from you along with solemn words and sacrifices, Indra.
Along with these good praises, seeking the prize they have (also) gone
to you, like horses to a contest, o you whose vehicle is songs.

7. Indra, whom the autumns do not age, nor do the months, nor days
make lean—
may his body, even though he is fully grown, grow stronger while it is
being celebrated by praises and solemn words.

8. He does not bow to the tough, nor to the stubborn, nor to the vaunting
one sped by the Dasyus, when he receives praise.
Even the towering mountains are flatlands for Indra. Even in the deep
there is a ford for him.

9. With a (vessel) that is deep and wide, o bearer of the vessel, hold forth
to us refreshments and prizes, you drinker of the pressings,
and stand erect with your help, allowing no harm, at the early
brightening of the night, at its final turn.

10. Accompany our leader to help him at the close encounter, or protect
him from harm from here, Indra.
Protect him from harm at home and in the wilderness. – Having good
heroes might we rejoice for a hundred winters.

VI.25 (466) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The clear purpose of this hymn is to solicit Indra's aid against enemies in battle. The various types of opponents are vividly described, as well as the potential types of hostile encounter: see especially the apparent wrestling match in 4ab. But the poet's expressed confidence in Indra's ability to provide the decisive assistance is also a subtle way of asserting the supremacy of Indra. This second theme can be seen

more clearly by examining the structure of the hymn: verse 5, which concerns the invincibility of Indra, is the exact middle of the hymn and serves as an omphalos; verses 4 and 6 match each other in structure and referents and form a ring around the omphalos, with a further ring provided by repeated phrases in verses 1/2 and 8/9, with Indra's supremacy repeated in verse 8.

1. What is your nearest help, what your farthest, and what your midmost, tempestuous Indra,
   with those (forms of help) help us well at the Vṛtra-smashing and with these prizes, as the great one among us, o mighty one.
2. With these (forms of help), o Indra, (you who) allow no harm—cause the contenders who oppose (us) to falter, cause the battle fury of the foe to falter;
   with them bring down all the attackers (to be) scattered asunder, bring down the Dāsa clans for the Ārya.
3. O Indra, the rapacious ones who, kin or not kin, have hitched themselves up, turning here against us,
   (render) their powers faltering, smash their bull-like (strengths), put them far away.
4. Now a champion may defeat (another) champion with his limbs when the two, their bodies gleaming, will set upon each other in their struggle to overcome,
   or when, with offspring, cattle, lineage, waters, and fields at stake, their two war-cries will dispute with each other.
5. Yet no champion, no overpowering and no bold one, no one thinking himself a fighter has fought against you.
   Indra, none of these is equal to you. You dominate all that have been born.
6. He is master of the manly power of both of these (armies) when the ritual adepts call on him in the clash,
   when, whether an obstacle or a dwelling place rich in men is at issue, the two (armies) in their expansion keep tussling mightily back and forth with one another.
7. So then, when your separate peoples will stir, Indra, become the rescuer and defender (of those,)
   our most manly patrons, who have set us ahead of the stranger, o Indra.
8. It was conceded to you, to your great Indrian power; everything was entirely conceded to you at the Vṛtra-smashing;
   dominion was conceded, victorious might conceded, o Indra worthy of sacrifice, conceded to you by the gods at the victory over men.
9. In just this way for us herd together the contenders in the battles. Indra, subdue the godless ones who oppose (us).
   And with your help, Indra, might we Bharadvājas know (this), as we sing just now at dawn.

VI.26 (467) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins (vss. 1–2) with an appeal to Indra for help in battles and contests, much as in the immediately preceding hymn. The first two verses also play with the word *vā́ja* "prize," perhaps punning on the name of the poet and his bardic clan, Bharad-vāja. The middle part of the hymn (vss. 3–6) gives brief accounts of Indra's battles against various named enemies and his aid to various named mortal allies; in this structure it is very reminiscent of VI.20, and many of the same incidents, with the same, often obscure names, are found in both hymns. The final two verses (7–8) beg Indra to show the same powers in aid of the poet and his patrons. The structure of the hymn is thus both fairly conventional and also symmetrical, with requests to the god in the first two and last two verses and the middle four verses providing previous models for the aid the god is asked to supply.

Stylistically noteworthy is the regular fronting of the personal pronoun. Beginning with verse 2, every half-verse through 5a has a fronted form of the 2nd-person singular pronoun "you" (and usually another one in an even pāda: 2d, 3b, 4d), either nominative *t*^{u}*vám* or accusative *tvā́m*. The rest of verse 5 briefly breaks the pattern, which returns in verse 6. Then, interestingly, the 1st person asserts itself: 7a *ahám* "I", 8a *vayám* "we," with 2nd-person genitive *táva* (7b) and instrumental *tváyā* (7c) interspersed. This distribution corresponds to the thematic structure of the hymn, with the recounting to Indra of his own deeds followed by requests of him by us mortals on our own behalf. Verse 7 brings the 1st person "I" and 2nd person "you" into happy conjunction.

1. Hear us, Indra. We are calling to you as we are "boiling over" at the
   winning of the great prize.
   When the clans clash together at the contest of champions, give us
   mighty help on the decisive day.
2. To you does the prizewinner, son of a prizewinner, call, at the winning of
   the great prize to be secured,
   to you, Indra, the surpassing master of settlements, when there are
   obstacles; to you does the fist-fighter look as he fights for cattle.
3. You spurred the poet [=Uśanā Kāvya] on at the winning of the (sun's)
   rays. You wrung out Śuṣṇa for the pious Kutsa.
   You struck far away the head of the invulnerable one, intending to do (a
   deed) worthy to be proclaimed for Atithigva.
4. You brought forward the towering battle-chariot, and helped the bull
   Daśadyu as he did battle.
   You struck down Tugra for Vetasu, in partnership. You, Indra,
   strengthened Tuji, the singer.

5. You made that hymn (endowed) with might, Indra, so that you could tear out hundreds and thousands (of goods), o champion.
   You struck the barbarian Śambara down from the mountain and furthered Divodāsa with glittering help.
6. You, reaching elation through the hospitality offerings and the soma juices, put Cumuri to sleep for Dabhīti.
   You, showing favor to Piṭhīnas, in partnership, smashed Raji and his sixty thousand with your power.
7. Might I also, together with my patrons, attain this, the greater favor and might that are yours, Indra,
   when along with you our heroes are praised, you who have our heroes as companions, along with Nahus who provides threefold defense, o strongest one.
8. Might we be your dearest comrades, Indra, at this invocation to heavenly brilliance, o great one.
   Let the son of Pratardana, glorious in dominion, be the most glorious at the smashing of obstacles and the winning of rich stakes.

VI.27 (468) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn traces a satisfying arc from beginning to end: the trajectory is not predictable, but the progress from a large and open question to extreme specificity is neatly handled. It begins with a question, a question all the more open because one of the crucial terms is unspecified (though easily supplied), the repeated pronoun *asya* "of it"—referring, clearly, to soma. The question is what did Indra make or create under the influence "of it," and the surprisingly broad answer given in the responsive verse 2 is "what exists."

The unqualified comprehensiveness of Indra' production—"being," "what exists"—is contrasted with our imperfect knowledge of his powers in verse 3. But even what small proportion of that power we have experienced (vs. 4) was more than sufficient to destroy the Vr̥cīvant army of the enemy Varaśikha for the benefit of the poet's patron, Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna—a battle described in verses 4–7. The second half of verse 6 is especially notable for its warrior slang: the phrase "playing the lord's role for an arrow," which also appears in X.27.6, in our opinion refers to warriors' boasting, and "breaking their pots," which many commentators have tried to interpret literally, must show the same use of "pot" for "head" as, for example, German "Kopf" and French "tête." In our opinion the site of the battle is the confluence of two rivers, mentioned by name in verses 5 and 6, and then referred to jointly in verse 7. The dual bovines in that verse have been variously interpreted, but

in our opinion, despite a problem with grammatical gender, the most likely referents are the rivers, in a phrase very reminiscent of one (III.33.1) describing two rivers as mother cows licking each other in the famous hymn III.33, the dialogue between the poet Viśvāmitra and two rivers.

The final verse is a dānastuti, praising and detailing the gift made by Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna to the poet. The poet gives his patron the epithets "bounteous," a standard qualification of Indra (as in vs. 3 in this very hymn), and "universal king," also regularly used of Indra (among other divinities). He thus verbally associates his patron with the unlimited power of Indra, as it was portrayed earlier in the hymn.

1. What did Indra create in the exhilaration of it, what at the drinking of it? what in the fellowship of it?
   Or those [=priests] who were there with joy at the installation of it—what did those previous ones acquire? what do the current ones?
2. Indra created what exists in the exhilaration of it, what exists at the drinking of it; what exists in the fellowship of it.
   Or those [=priests] who were there with joy at the installation of it—the previous ones acquired what exists; the current ones what exists.
3. But yet we do not know your whole greatness, nor bounteousness, o bounteous one,
   nor every current benefit (of yours). O Indra, your (whole) Indrian strength has not shown itself.
4. (But) there *has* appeared just that Indrian strength of yours with which you smashed the posterity of Varaśikha,
   when from the blast of your mace when it was smashed down, from just its sound, their farthest (division) shattered, Indra.
5. Indra smashed the posterity of Varaśikha, doing his best for Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna,
   when at the Hariyūpīyā (River) he smashed the Vr̥cīvants in the front division, and the rear (division) shattered from fear.
6. O much-invoked Indra, at the Yavyāvatī (River), though they were a hundred thirty altogether and armor-clad, with a yen for fame,
   the Vr̥cīvants, playing the lord's role for an arrow, breaking their own "pots," came to failed ends.
7. He for whom the two ruddy cows [=rivers?], seeking good pasturage, acted the go-between as they licked each other again and again,
   he handed Turvaśa and the Vr̥cīvants over to Sr̥ñjaya, doing his best for the son of Devavāta.
8. O Agni, chariot-steeds by twos and twenty head of cattle together with brides does the bounteous, universal king give to me—
   Abhyāvartin the son of Cayamāna. Difficult to attain is this priestly gift of the Pārthavas.

VI.28 (469) The Cows and Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2–4, anuṣṭubh 8

Although this hymn is found right in the middle of the Indra cycle, the Anukramaṇī assigns most of the verses in this hymn to the cows (1, 3–8c), with a few (2, 8d) to the cows or Indra. The hymn was later used as a blessing for cows as they return home, but it may originally have been intended to bless the cows given as a dakṣiṇā (priestly gift) as they enter the home of their new owner. According to the Vaitāna Śrauta Sūtra 21.24, the sacrificer awaited the cows intended for the dakṣiṇā with the hymn Atharvaveda IV.21 (=R̥V VI.28.1–7). It is worth noting that almost the last word of the preceding hymn (VI.27.8d) is *dákṣiṇā*, and this may have invited the placement of this hymn here.

The safety of the cows of the pious man as they graze is the subject of much of the hymn, and the various dangers that could befall them are detailed: being stolen by a thief or in a cattle raid, getting lost, going to the slaughterhouse. They are also given rather grandiose identifications in verse 5, including with Indra: 5c is a clear echo, almost to parody, of the famous hymn II.12 with its refrain: "he, o peoples, is Indra."

The final verse is in a different meter, and as it is not part of the Atharvaveda version of this hymn, it was probably originally separate. In form it is a magical exhortation and makes use of the only slightly euphemistic verb *upa-√pr̥c* "mix sexually." The verse obviously expresses the wish that the cows become impregnated, and thus picks up the adjective "bearing offspring" in verses 2 and 7. The use of the near deictic "right here" modifying "the inseminator" suggests that the performance of the spell has a physical component in addition to the verbal, as is regularly found in the Atharvaveda.

1. The cows have come here and have made (the house) blessed. Let them find a place in the cow-stall; let them find enjoyment among us.
   Here should those of many colors be, bearing offspring, as through many dawns they give milk for Indra.
2. Indra does his best for the man who sacrifices and delivers in full. He gives more; he does not steal what belongs to him.
   Making wealth increase more and more just for him, he establishes the man devoted to the gods in undivided virgin land.
3. These will not be lost, and no thief will take them by deception. No enemy will venture against their meandering course.
   Those (cows) with which he sacrifices and gives to the gods, he keeps company with them as their cowherd for a very long time.
4. No dusty-necked steed gets to them (in a cattle raid), nor do they go to the place for dressing [=slaughterhouse].
   The cows of the mortal who sacrifices wander far across wide-ranging (space) free of fear.

5. Fortune has appeared to me as cows; Indra as cows. The draught of the first soma is cows.
   These cows here—they, o peoples, are Indra. I am just searching, with my heart and mind, for Indra.
6. You fatten even the thin man, o cows. You make even one without beauty to have a lovely face.
   You make the house blessed, o you of blessed speech. Your vigor is declared loftily in the assemblies.
7. Bearing offspring, cropping good pasturage, drinking pure waters at a good watering hole—
   let not a thief be master of you, nor one who utters evil. Might the lance of Rudra avoid you.
8. Right here is the inseminator: let there be inseminating right here in these cows,
   right here when the semen of the bull (is here), right here when your virility (is here), o Indra.

VI.29 (470) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The most notable feature in this hymn is the theme of "attachment," which is played with semantically and syntactically in verses 2–4. In verse 2 it is Indra's own powers that are attached to him, or rather to his hand (see also the mace in hand in vs. 1), but in the following two verses ritual elements offered by men are the attachments. Since the final verse (6) is a summary verse, introduced as often by *evā́* "in this way," verses 2–4 constitute an omphalos defined by the attachment theme. Interestingly, the only one of Indra's great deeds mentioned in this hymn is his forceful *separation* of heaven and earth (vs. 5b), which provides a conceptual opposite to the attachment elsewhere.

The larger concern of the hymn is the reciprocal relation between men, who offer Indra sacrifice and praise poetry, and Indra, who places his power in the service of men and offers them gifts. This relationship is announced in the first verse, especially in the word "partnership, comradeship" in the first pāda, and is also conveyed iconically by the "attachment" of the words "Indra" and "men," which occur next to each other initial in the opening pāda of the hymn, and again in 4c (*índraṃ [vo] náraḥ*). The relationship between the god and his worshipers is here modeled on that between the poet-sacrificer and his patron. Indra is in fact called a "patron" in verse 5 and described as providing the priestly gift (dakṣiṇā) in verse 3, which is the task and prerogative of a patron.

1. The men serve Indra for you [=patrons or priests] for the sake of his partnership and benevolence, as they go on finding pleasure in the great one,
   for he whose hand holds the mace is the giver of a great (thing). Sacrifice to the great and delightful one for help.
2. To which hand manly powers are firmly attached, (as) a chariot driver is to his golden chariot,
   (as) reins are to the two brawny fists, (as) bullish horses yoked together are to the road.
3. For your glory do our friendly services firmly attach themselves to your two feet [=do homage]. As the bold mace-bearer, (you) provide the priestly gift;
   wearing a fragrant cloak, (lovely) to be seen like the sun, you have become vigorous, o dancer.
4. (But) the pressed soma has become the most firmly attached (to him), in whose (presence) the cooked food is cooked and there are roasted grains,
   while the men who create the sacred formulations are praising Indra and reciting their hymns as the men most cherished by the gods.
5. No limit has been set for this vast power of yours. He forced apart the two world-halves with his greatness.
   With his help our patron [=Indra] brings these things to fulfillment as he keeps thrusting, as if driving his herds together to the waters.
6. Just in this way let lofty Indra be easily called—the warrior with golden lips, with his help that needs no help,
   for in this way was he born with unequalled, surpassing might. He will strike down many obstacles [/Vr̥tras] and Dasyus.

VI.30 (471) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is entirely a celebration of Indra's cosmogonic and cosmos-maintaining deeds and powers. The only possible indications of a human dimension in the hymn are the oblique reference to the soma sacrifice in the first pāda of the hymn, the granting of good things in the second pāda, and the ruminative "I think" at the beginning of the second verse. The pace of the hymn is brisk, but this straightforward recital of the high points of Indra's career has a pleasing balance and variety in its expressions.

1. He has been strengthened even more for the heroic deed; he alone, the unaging, apportions good things.

Indra projects beyond heaven and earth: the two worlds are equivalent to just half of him.

2. Therefore I think his lordly power to be lofty. Those things that he upholds, no one alters.
   Day after day the sun becomes visible. The strong-willed one distributed the seats widely.
3. Even today, even now, this is the labor of the rivers, since you dug out a way for them, Indra.
   The mountains settled down like (flies) settling on food. By you were the airy realms fixed fast, o you of strong will.
4. This is really true: there exists no other like you. Indra, no god nor mortal is greater.
   You smashed the serpent that lay around the flood; you sent the waters surging toward the sea.
5. You (sent) forth the waters, (opened) wide the doors in every direction. Indra, you broke the fastness of the mountain.
   You became the king of the moving world and of the settled domains, begetting at once the sun, heaven, and dawn.

VI.31 (472) Indra

Suhotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 4

This hymn begins by proclaiming Indra's power over all peoples and all the cosmic and earthly realms (vss. 1–2), before focusing on several of his famous battles and the mortals he aided in them (vss. 3–4). The final verse exhorts Indra to perform the same martial services for us.

The most interesting verse is the first, where at first glance the logical connections among the three clauses are not clear. But the contrast between the singleness and unification of the first half of the verse and the division in the second seems to be the point. Indra is the single lord of wealth because he can gather all peoples just in his two hands—peoples who were otherwise disunited and quarreling over the various goods of existence. Indra's act of unification in this verse seems to be a kind of wishful thinking on the poet's part, however, for the battles depicted in verses 3 and 4 are the result of disunity, and in verse 5 we call on Indra for aid in the same sorts of disputations found in 1cd. The "separate peoples" (*carṣaṇí*) of verse 1 also return in verse 5; the poet wishes to see them as a sort of universal audience for the fame of himself and his people, brought about by Indra's intervention on their behalf.

1. You, o wealth-lord, have become the single (lord) of wealth: you have taken (all) the communities in your hands, Indra.

The separate peoples, disputants, were disputing with each other over progeny and posterity, the waters, and the sun.

2. Through fear of you, Indra, all the earthly realms, though unshakeable, are brought to shaking.
Heaven and earth, the mountains, and the forests—all that is firmly fixed takes fright at your drive.
3. You, Indra—fight along with Kutsa against the insatiable Śuṣṇa, the demon of bad harvest, in the quest for cattle,
and against his ten before the (ritual) mealtime. Then you steal the wheel of the sun. You have toiled at your labors.
4. You smashed down hundreds of impregnable fortresses of the Dasyu Śambara,
when, able one, with your ability you did your best for Divodāsa the presser and for Bharadvāja the singer, for (them to obtain) goods, o you who can be bought with the pressing.
5. Mount your fearsome chariot, you real "real thing," powerfully manly, for the great battle.
O you in the vanguard, drive here toward me with your help, and proclaim our fame, famous one, to the separate peoples.

VI.32 (473) Indra

Suhotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the common practice, whereby the final verse of the hymn constitutes the poet's summing up of his hymn, in this hymn the first verse serves this purpose, in meta-relationship with what follows. The remaining verses, each of which begins with the pronoun *sá* "he," constitute the praise the poet announced in verse 1. Verses 2–3 refer to the Vala myth, with special attention paid to Indra's companions in this enterprise, the unnamed Aṅgirases, and verse 5 may be an oblique account of the aftermath of the Vr̥tra slaying. In verse 4 Indra is exhorted to grant the singer powers and riches.

1. For him I have fashioned with my mouth these words, unprecedented, best of many, most wealful—for the great hero, powerful and precipitous,
conferring abundance, bearing the mace, stalwart.
2. He made the two mothers of the poets shine with the sun; he broke the rock as he was being hymned.
Bellowing [/being eager] along with the very attentive versifiers, he let loose the binding of the ruddy cows.

3. He, the doer of many deeds, triumphed every time when cattle were at stake, in company with the conveyors (of songs), the versifiers with their knees fixed.
   Acting as comrade along with his comrades, the smasher of fortresses broke the firmly fixed fortresses, being a poet along with poets.
4. As great one, drive here to the singer with (riches) to clothe (him), with prizes, and with your great unbridled powers,
   with (riches) bringing many heroes, o bull of the settlements, you who long for songs—for good faring.
5. He, launched in a surge with power along with his coursers, Indra, overcoming the precipitous, (sent) the waters (surging) to the right.
   Sent surging in just that way, without turning aside, day after day (the waters) have toiled at their purpose, not to be neglected.

VI.33 (474) Indra

Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

A martial hymn. The poet reminds Indra that he will receive entreaties for help from all sides in the combat (vs. 2, using language almost identical to that in nearby VI.31.1), but begs him to help our side alone, in battles and in contests. The poetry is for the most part quite straightforward, except for the enigmatic expression in verse 3 (probably not coincidentally the middle verse), in which Indra's weapons against formidable enemies appear to be "well-placed cloaks." This expression has been much discussed, and a number of scholars have opted to emend it. But it likely refers to Indra's penchant for shape-shifting disguises in combat. Moreover, the word "well-placed" (*súdhita*) is phonologically close to a word for "hatchet" (*svádhiti*), and this pun may well be lurking in the simile about trees.

1. What is the most mighty, o Indra, give that to us: your (battle-)ecstasy, very superior and rich in gifts, o bull,
   which, possessing good horses, will win a mass of good horses and will defeat obstacles and enemies in battles.
2. For the separate peoples, disputants, call (separately) on you for help at the contest of champions.
   You dispersed the niggards through (the inspiration of) the inspired poets, and it is just through your aid that the charger is the winner of the prize.
3. You, o champion, smite both kinds of enemies, the Dāsa and the Ārya obstacles,
   like trees (with hatchets), with your well-placed cloaks. Break (them) apart in the battles, o most manly of men.

4. You, Indra—by your unstinting help become our lifelong companion and helper for our strengthening,
   when, in the winning of the sun, we call upon you as we fight, facing the other side in battles, o champion.
5. (So) should you be for us, now and for the future, Indra. Be there for us in mercy and in superiority.
   Singing in just this way, might we be under the protection of the great one and on the decisive day be the best winners of cattle.

VI.34 (475) Indra

Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The first verse of this hymn is a remarkably condensed expression of the poetic economy: Indra is both the recipient of praise songs and the source of inspiration for those poetic thoughts. Moreover, all poets, past and present, vie to attract Indra's attention, each with his own poem. The rest of the hymn develops these thoughts. Verses 2–3 continue the theme of multiple poets focusing on a single object, Indra, and then provide a transition to the final two verses (4–5), which celebrate the benefits that Indra receives from praise and sacrifice in a manner that indicates that our praise and sacrifice are happening now.

1. Many songs have converged on you, Indra, and out from you go inspired thoughts far and wide.
   Previously and now, the seers' songs of praise, their recitations and hymns, have contended over Indra.
2. The skillful one, who is called upon by many and welcomed by many, who alone is celebrated by many with sacrifices—
   like a chariot yoked for great power, Indra is to be cheered on.
3. Indra, whom neither insightful thoughts nor voices harm; they just approach him, making him strong.
   When a hundred, when a thousand praisers sing to him who longs for song, that is weal for him.
4. This is (weal) for him: seeking attachment, the soma has been set firmly in Indra, like the two shining ones, (sun and) moon, in heaven.
   Our invocations along with our sacrifices have entirely strengthened (him), like a man in the desert when waters con(verge) on him.
5. This is (weal) for him: a great song for him, a praise hymn for Indra has been spoken through our composed thoughts,
   so that, in the great overcoming of Vr̥tra [/obstacles], Indra will be our lifelong helper and strengthener.

VI.35 (476) Indra

Nara Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the last hymn, which calmly contemplates the good our praise is doing for Indra, this hymn inquires impatiently about the reward we should receive for this activity, a mood conveyed by the peremptory questions of the first three verses and the commands of verse 4.

The final verse (5) is syntactically very difficult and has given rise to a variety of interpretations, especially of the first half-verse. We consider it a reference to the Vala myth (as is clear at least in the mention of the Aṅgirases in d and also probably of the doors in b): the poet hopes that the mythic opening of the Vala cave and the good things that emerged from it will serve as a model for Indra's wished-for bounties now. The "community" is probably both the poet's own people and the Aṅgirases as comrades of Indra.

1. When will the sacred formulations find their resting place in the chariot?
   When will you give to the praiser what will prosper a thousandfold?
   When will you clothe his praise song with wealth? When will you make
   his insights have prizes as jewels?
2. Just when will it be, Indra, that you will place in your own nest our men
   with your men, our heroes with your heroes? Win the contests!
   With cattle at stake, you will win cattle three times over. Indra, grant to
   us sunlit brilliance.
3. Just when will it be, Indra, that you will make the sacred formulation
   provided with all goods for the singer, o strongest one?
   When will you team your teams, as (we do our) insights? When will you
   go to the calls whose bounty is cattle?
4. Lay on for the singer nourishments whose bounty is cattle, whose glitter
   is horses, whose fame is prizes of victory.
   Swell the good-milking cow with refreshments, Indra. Might you make
   them shine very bright among the Bharadvājas.
5. This community here and now do I sing, as (I did) also at another time,
   when as champion, able one, you (opened) wide the doors.
   May I not miss out on the milk-cow whose milk is clear (soma) [/semen].
   Quicken the Āṅgirases, o inspired poet, with your sacred formulation.

VI.36 (477) Indra

Nara Bhāradvāja
5 verses: triṣṭubh

An unqualified celebration of Indra's complete power and his control of all beings and things, both earthly and heavenly. It is hoped that the peoples' offerings to

Indra, the soma (vs. 1), the sacrificial offerings (vs. 2), and the songs (vs. 3), will provoke answering generosity (vs. 4). This reciprocal relationship is economically expressed in the last half of verse 5.

1. Completely yours are the exhilarating (drinks) stemming from all peoples, and completely the riches that come from the earth.
   Completely have you become the apportioner of prizes, as you uphold your lordship among the gods.
2. The people have sacrificed fore and after offerings to his might. Completely have they conceded to his heroic power
   and to the headstrong charger pulling at the reins. They bend their will (to him) at the smashing of Vr̥tra [/obstacles].
3. Directed to the same goal, his forms of help, his bullish powers, his manly powers, and his teams accompany Indra.
   Like rivers to the sea, the songs whose gusts are solemn words enter him of broad expanse.
4. As you are sung, let loose the wellspring of wealth, Indra, and of much-glittering goods.
   You have become the unequalled lord of peoples, you alone the king of all creation.
5. You who seek friendship—hear what is worthy to be heard: Like heaven over the earth, sur(mount) the riches of the stranger,
   so that you will keep finding enjoyment in us and you will keep showing yourself with your strength and your vigor generation after generation.

VI.37 (478) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The first three verses follow the model of a "journey" hymn, but with a twist. The fallow bays of verse 1 are Indra's familiar horses, bringing his chariot to the sacrifice, but the same word (*hárayaḥ*) in verse 2 refers to the tawny soma drops. In verse 3 we return to the real horses, qualified as "charging straight on," just like the soma in the previous verse. The mention of Vāyu in verse 3 identifies the ritual in question as the Morning Pressing.

The remaining two verses of the hymn (4–5) do not continue the journey theme. Instead Indra is configured as a (divine) patron (vs. 5), who gives the priestly gift to the (human) patrons (vs. 4). See VI.29 for a similar identification of Indra with the sacrificial patron.

1. Close to here let your yoked fallow bays convey your chariot, which brings all desirable things, mighty Indra,
   for even the weakling calls upon you, (as well as the man) of solar glory. Might we achieve success as your feasting companions today.
2. The fallow bays [=soma drops] have gone forth to their labor in the wooden cup, and while being purified, they have come to be charging straight on.
   Indra should be the first to drink of this (soma) of ours, as the heaven-ruling king of soma's exhilaration.
3. Making their run here, the chariot-horses should convey powerful Indra on (the chariot) with good wheels,
   as they are charging straight on toward fame. Never should Vāyu's immortal (drink) give out.
4. Indra, the most excellent, the most powerfully ranging of the bounteous ones, sets in motion his priestly gift—
   with which, mace-bearer, you evade difficult straits and you apportion bounties to our patrons, bold one.
5. Indra is the giver of the enduring prize. Let Indra increase through the songs, his greatness increased;
   let Indra be the best smiter of Vr̥tra [/the obstacle] as a consummate warrior. Our patron brings these things to fulfillment as he keeps thrusting.

VI.38 (479) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The context of this hymn is the morning ritual, and its aim is to attract Indra to it by our invocation, which is the subject of the first two verses. In verse 1 Agni seems to carry the invocation heavenward; in the second the invocation turns Indra here. The strength Indra will derive from both praise and sacrifice occupy the next two verses (3–4), and the final verse summarizes our attempts to attract him and the benefits he will provide us.

Especially in the first two verses the poet is coy about reference, and the audience must guess the subjects of the verbs and the referents of the pronouns until the last pāda of verse 2.

1. He [=Agni?] has drunk from here; the most glittering one will carry up our great, heaven-bright invocation to Indra.
   On his journey he of good gifts will win a more admirable insightful thought as present for the divine folk.

2. Even from a distance, his two ears take residence here. It will sound—
   when speaking of Indra, it thunders:
   this invocation to the gods should turn him—Indra—here toward me,
   this one just now being recited.
3. With my highest insight, with my recitations I have roared for you to
   ageless Indra, born of old.
   Not only have the sacred formulations and the songs together been
   placed in him, but in Indra the great praise puts strength.
4. Indra, whom the sacrifice will strengthen and the soma, (whom) the
   sacred formulation will strengthen, and the songs, solemn words, and
   thoughts—
   so strengthen him at the coming of dawn from night. The months,
   autumns, and days will strengthen Indra.
5. In just this way we now would seek to attract him here—him who was
   born for vanquishing, who has been strengthened, and not by halves,
   for famed generosity,
   him, great and mighty, for help in the overcoming of obstacles [/Vr̥tra], o
   inspired poet.

VI.39 (480) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the previous hymn, this one is tied to the here-and-now of the ritual situation; also like the previous hymn, this one plays games with reference. The subject of the hymn is really soma, but the word "soma" does not appear in it, and in the middle verses of the hymn, which are insistently about soma, the poet intentionally misleads us about the referent.

In verse 1 a long series of adjectives in the genitive describing an unidentified being is resolved by the verb "you have drunk"—the subject is Indra, and the genitive referent must be soma. The three middle verses (2–4) form an omphalos defined by the repeated near deictic "this one here." This pronoun should have a referent in the immediate vicinity of the poet, but the first of these verses concerns what is clearly the Vala myth, which invites the audience to supply Indra as the subject. It is only as the sequence unfolds (and especially with the specification of "this one" as a "drop" in vs. 3) that it becomes clear that soma is taking the role of Indra is these verses.

For a similar covert coding of soma, there by the use of the genitive pronoun *asya* "of it, of this one" see VI.27.1–2.

1. Of the gladdening poet, of the heavenly draft-horse, of the one of
   inspired thought, of the speaking honey,

of this companion of ours have you drunk, o god. Bind refreshments tipped with cows to the singer.

2. This one here eagerly (breaks) the rock en(closing) the ruddy (cows), as the one whose yoke is truth, having been yoked by those of true insights;
   he breaks apart the unbreakable back of the Vala cave. Indra will fight against the Paṇis with words.
3. This drop here lights up the unlit nights in the evening and at dawn through the autumns, o Indra.
   This one they established to be ever the beacon of the days: he has made the dawns to have blazing birth.
4. This one here, himself shining, makes the unshining ones shine. This one makes the many (dawns) dawn forth through truth.
   This one speeds with his horses whose yoke is truth, with his sun-finding (wheel-)nave, as he fills the domains.
5. Being sung now, ancient king, swell many refreshments for the giving of good things to the singer.
   Give waters, plants without poison, trees, cows, chargers, and men for the praising.

VI.40 (481) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is for the most part a typical invitation to Indra, to drive to our sacrifice and drink the soma. However, it is chronologically backward. The first two verses urge Indra to drink, the first opening with a peremptory command, "Indra, drink!" The next two verses (3–4) command Indra to "drive here," the logically prior action. Only in the last verse do the two actions occur together, in the temporally appropriate order. The imperative "drink!" (*píba*) found as the second word in the hymn is matched in the last pāda of the hymn by another imperative "take a drink" (*pāhi*), likewise second in its pāda, both verbs formed to the same root but in the present and aorist systems respectively.

Note also the reciprocal expressions in the final pādas of verses 1 and 4: in verse 1 it is Indra who will create vitality for the singer and the sacrifice; in verse 4 by contrast the sacrifice creates vitality for Indra.

The final word of the hymn, "with the Maruts," establishes the Midday Pressing as the ritual in question. The Maruts are also obliquely referred to in the first verse, in the phrase "amid your troop."

1. Indra, drink! It is pressed for you for your exhilaration. Unhitch your two fallow bays; let loose your two partners.

And sing forth here having sat down amid your troop. Then create vitality for the singer for sacrifice.

2. Drink of this, of which you drank when you were just born, Indra, for your exhilaration and for your resolve, o you who confer abundance. This drop have the cows, the men, the waters, and the stone together impelled for you—for it to be fully drunk.
3. With the fire kindled, Indra, the soma has been pressed. Let your fallow bays, the best conveyors, convey you here. With a mind seeking you, I call upon you again and again. Drive here, Indra, for our great good faring.
4. Drive here. Over and over you have driven with your great and eager mind to the soma-drinking, Indra. You will listen to these sacred formulations of ours, and then the sacrifice will create vitality for your body.
5. When, Indra, on the decisive day, whether (you are) remote or in your own seat, or wherever you are... from there (drive) with your team to our sacrifice to help us. Take a drink, joined in revelry with the Maruts, o you who long for the songs.

VI.41 (482) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Another invitation to Indra to drink the soma. The usual "drive" theme is also present (vss. 1, 4, 5), but backgrounded. The emphasis is on the attractions of the particular soma offered. Only in the last pāda of the last verse does the poet ask Indra for something in return.

1. Free of anger, drive here to the sacrifice. For you do the pressed soma drops purify themselves. Like cows toward their own home, o mace-bearer, come here, Indra, as the first of those worthy of the sacrifice.
2. Your throat, which is well-fashioned, which is the widest, with which you are always drinking the wave of honey, take a drink with it. The Adhvaryu has set (the soma) forth for you. Let your mace turn itself to the pursuit of cows, Indra.
3. This drop, the soma, a bull of all colors, has been brought to perfection for bullish Indra. Drink it, o powerful master of bays, (chariot-)mounter—this of which you are master from of old, which is your food.

4. Pressed soma is better than unpressed, Indra, and this (soma) here is
   even better, for the discriminating to enjoy.
   Drive here to this sacrifice, you overcomer. Through it fulfill all your
   powers.
5. We are calling you, Indra: drive nearby. The soma will be fit for
   your body.
   O you of a hundred resolves, bring yourself to exhilaration on the
   pressed (drinks). Further us in battles and among the clans.

VI.42 (483) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–3, bṛhatī 4

Yet another hymn concerned almost entirely with Indra's soma-drinking, but unlike the immediately preceding hymns, Indra is not directly urged to come and drink the soma. Rather, Indra is in the 3rd person throughout, and commands are issued to a single individual (vss. 1, 4) and to a group (vss. 2–3), to serve Indra. None of the addressees is identified until verse 4, with its vocative addressing the Adhvaryu. He is likely therefore also to be the addressee in verse 1; presumably the priests as a whole are addressed by the plural imperatives in the internal verses.

In this otherwise ritually focused hymn, the very specific anxiety expressed in the last half-verse comes as some surprise, a surprise mirrored in the meter, with the 12/8 half-verse contrasting with the 8/8 structure that has prevailed throughout. This wondering question about Indra's possible aid against the boastful slanderer functionally fills the usual hymn-final slot of direct plea to the god for help, despite its indirection.

1. Present (it) to him who desires to drink, who knows all things,
   to the superior man who comes fittingly, who comes regularly, who does
   not lag behind.
2. Go toward him, the best of the soma-drinkers, with the soma juices,
   to Indra possessing the silvery drink, with tankards, with the
   pressed drops.
3. When you attend on him with the pressed soma drops,
   the wise one knows of it all, but he boldly hastens just to that one
   [=soma].
4. Just to this one here [=Indra], o Adhvaryu, bring forth the pressed (juice)
   of the stalk.
   Surely he will rescue (us) from the calumny of anyone who boastfully
   claims high breeding?

VI.43 (484) Indra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: uṣṇih

A simple hymn, in which the refrain (pāda c of each verse) offers Indra soma to drink, and the first half of each verse consists of a definitional relative clause referring to Indra's deeds in his soma-exhilaration. As often, the pattern set in the rest of the hymn is modified but not entirely broken in the final verse: verses 1–3 contain the syntagm *yásya... máda-* "(in) whose exhilaration," while the final verse substitutes the participle *mandānā́* "finding exhilaration" for the etymologically related noun *máda*, and also inserts a part of the soma plant, its stalk, on which the relative pronoun is dependent.

1. In whose exhilaration you subdued Śambara for Divodāsa—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
2. Whose sharp-pressed exhilaration, whose middle and end, you guard—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
3. In whose exhilaration you set loose from the rock the cows fixed firm within—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!
4. Finding exhilaration in whose stalk, you acquire the capacity for generosity—
   here is that soma, Indra, pressed for you. Drink!

VI.44 (485) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
24 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–6, triṣṭubh or virāj 7, 9, virāj 8, triṣṭubh 10–24, arranged in tr̥cas

A composite hymn placed toward the end of the Indra cycle in Maṇḍala VI, the hymn consists of eight tr̥cas, the first two (vss. 1–6) in anuṣṭubh, the third (vss. 7–9) in a mixture of triṣṭubh and virāj, and the remaining five (vss. 10–24) in triṣṭubh. Several of the tr̥cas are rhetorically unified: 1–3 with its repeated second half-verse following a definitional relative clause; 19–21 with its insistent "bull" theme; 22–24 with its repeated half-verse-initial "this one here" (*ayám*) referring to soma. The others have less obvious internal unity, though there is often a continuity of theme or subject. There is also no visible external unity among the tr̥cas collected in this "hymn," though it seldom strays far from Indra and the soma-drinking, the topic of many of the immediately preceding hymns. Indeed, Oldenberg (1888: 203) suggests that VI.44 owes its position to the similarity between the refrain of its first tr̥ca and the refrain of VI.43.

1. The one that is wealthiest, o wealthy one, that is most brilliant through its brilliance,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.
2. The capable one that is yours, o powerfully capable one, the giver of wealth and of thoughts,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.
3. The one through which (you are) like one grown strong by (his own) power and like one overpowering by his own forms of help,
   the pressed soma—that is your exhilarating drink, o Indra, lord of independent power.

4. I will sing for you to this lord of power, who never smites (us) away,
   to Indra, the all-conquering superior man, most bounteous, possessing all domains.
5. He whom songs make strong, the lord of overpowering generosity—
   his tempestuous force do the two world-halves, the goddesses, respect.
6. It (is mine) to lay on your behalf, with the power of solemn speech, the underlayer for Indra,
   whose forms of helps are like inspired words, since, dwelling together, they spread apart in their ascent.

7. Our newer ally [=Soma] has found the skill. Having been drunk, he has perceived what is better for the gods.
   Having won with the brawny racers [?], in making broad shelter he became a protector for his comrades.
8. On the path of truth, the ritual adept has been drunk. The gods have set their minds for glory.
   Acquiring the name of "great" by (ritual) speeches, the one worthy of the quest has disclosed his wondrous form to be seen.
9. Bestow the most brilliant skill on us. Repel the many hostilities of the peoples.
   Make our vitality higher through your abilities. Help us in the winning of the stake.

10. Indra, we have become ready just for you, the giver, you generous possessor of the fallow bays. Do not lose the track.
    No one has shown himself as our friend among mortals. Do they not call you a rouser (even) of the weak?
11. Give us not to exhaustion, bull. Let us not come to harm in our comradeship with you, the wealthy.
    Many are the tributes for you among the peoples, Indra. Smite the non-pressers; rip away those who don't deliver.

12. Like the thunderer the rain clouds, Indra stirs up bounties of horses and cattle.
    It is you who provide nourishment to the bard from of old. Let those without gifts not trick you away from (our) benefactor.

13. O Adhvaryu, hero, give of the pressed (soma drinks) to great Indra, for he is its king,
    he who has grown strong by the previous and the present songs of singing seers.
14. In its exhilaration, knowing many shapes, Indra smashed unopposable obstacles.
    Pour forth for him the honeyed soma, for the belipped hero to drink.
15. Let Indra be the one who drinks the pressed soma, who smashes the obstacle [/Vr̥tra] with his mace in his exhilaration,
    who goes to the sacrifice, even from far away, who is the good helper of insights, providing nourishment to the bard.

16. Here is this drinking cup, giving drink to Indra. Indra's dear immortal (drink) has been drunk,
    so that it will exhilarate the god for the sake of his good favor and will keep hatred and constraint away from us.
17. Becoming exhilarated by it, o champion, smash your rivals and your foes, both kin and non-kin, o bounteous one.
    Those with weapons aimed at us, setting their sights on us—pulverize and smash them, Indra, (for them to become) far away.
18. Once more, in these our battles, bounteous Indra, make for us a great wide space and easy passage.
    Go halves with our patrons, Indra, in the conquering of the waters, of life and lineage.

19. Your fallow bays, the bulls that have been yoked, the steeds with their bullish chariot and with their bullish reins,
    the bulls that convey your mace—let them, well-yoked, convey you here in our direction for bullish exhilaration.
20. The bulls have mounted the wooden cup for you, o bull, like waves spraying ghee as they bring exhilaration.
    Indra, to you, the bullish bull, they present soma from out of the (drops) pressed by bulls.
21. You are the bullish bull of heaven and of earth, the bullish bull of the rivers and of the standing waters.
    O bull, for bullish you the drop has swelled, the sweet sap, the honeyed drink, to your liking.

22. This god here, being born with strength, with Indra as his yokemate, blocked the Paṇi [/niggard].

This one here, the drop, stole the weapons of his own father, the tricks of the unkindly one.

23. This one gave the dawns a good husband; this one placed light within the sun.
This one found the threefold immortal one hidden in heaven among the third realms of light.

24. This one propped apart heaven and earth; this one yoked the chariot with seven reins.
This one, Soma, by his ability, secures the cooked (milk) within the cows, the wellspring with its ten fastenings: Soma!

VI.45 (486) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
33 verses: gāyatrī, except atinicr̥t 29, anuṣṭubh 33, arranged in tr̥cas

Like the preceding hymn, this one is composed of tr̥cas, the first ten to Indra, the last one (vss. 31–33) a dānastuti to the patron Br̥bu. Given its position in the Indra cycle, it is unlikely to have been originally a single hymn, but there are some themes that keep recurring throughout the hymn, such as the comparison of Indra with a cow or calf (vss. 7, 22, 25–26, 28), the sacred formulation as a vehicle for Indra (vss. 4, 7, 19), and the stake that is set as a prize in a contest (vss. 2, 11–13, 15). However, rhetorical unity within tr̥cas seems almost entirely lacking.

1. Who with good leading led Turvaśa and Yadu here from afar,
he is Indra, our youthful comrade.
2. Placing vitality even in the uninspired, even with a steed lacking speed,
Indra is the winner of the stake that is set.
3. Great is his guidance and many are the encomia for him.
His help does not perish.

4. Comrades, chant and sing forth to him whose vehicle is the sacred formulation,
for he is great solicitude for us.
5. You, o Vr̥tra-smasher, are the helper of one, of two,
and for such as we are.
6. Only you lead (us) beyond hatreds; you make (us) proclaimers of solemn speech;
and you are called rich in heroes by superior men.

7. To the formulator whose vehicle is the sacred formulation, to the comrade worthy of verses
do I call with my songs, as to a cow to be milked,

8. In whose two hands all good things are at home, now as before—
(in the hands) of the hero, victorious in battles.
9. (Tear) apart even the strongholds of the peoples, o possessor of the stone and lord of power;
tear (apart) their tricks, you who can't be bowed.

10. It is just you, o Indra, you real one, you drinker of soma and lord of prizes,
that we have called upon, seeking fame—
11. Just you, who were before or who are now to be called upon when the stake is set.
Hear our call!
12. With insights as our steeds, (might we win) steeds and prizes worthy of fame, o Indra;
with you might we win the stake that is set.

13. You became great when the stake was set, o Indra, you hero who longs for songs,
and the one worth tussling for at the raid.
14. Your help that has the quickest speed, o smasher of foes—
with that impel our chariot.
15. As the best charioteer, with our chariot on the attack,
win, o winner, the stake that is set.

16. Praise only him, who alone was born as the limitless lord of the separate peoples,
having a bullish will.
17. You who were the only friend with help, the kindly comrade of the singers,
have mercy on us, Indra.
18. Set your mace in your hands to smash the demons, mace-bearer.
You should overpower your opponents.

19. The ancient yokemate of riches, the comrade who spurs on the weak,
the one who most has the sacred formulation as his vehicle—upon him do I call.
20. For he alone is lord of all the good things of the earth,
the rich one who most longs for songs.
21. (Coming) here with your teams, fulfill our desire with prizes of horses
and of cows, lord of cows, acting boldly.

22. Sing this at the pressing to the warrior called upon by many,
(this) that is weal for the able one as if for a cow.
23. The good one will not hold back his gift of a prize of cattle
when he will hear these songs.

24. For the smiter of Dasyus will certainly go forth to somebody's cattle enclosure;
    with his powers he will open it up.

25. These songs bellow out again and again to you, o you of a hundred resolves,
    like mothers to their calf, Indra.
26. Partnership with you is difficult to attain. You are, o hero, the cow for him who seeks cattle.
    Become the horse for him who seeks horses.
27. Find exhilaration from the stalk, then, to show great generosity with your own person.
    You will not put your praiser to scorn.

28. These songs come near to you at every pressing, o you who long for songs,
    as milk-cows do their calf—
29. (You,) the first among many at the verbal contest of the many praiser-singers,
    who compete for the prize with their prizes.
30. Let ours be the praise song that best conveys you nearest, Indra.
    Impel us toward great wealth.

31. Bṛbu has stood upon the highest head of the niggards [/Paṇis];
    (he is) as broad of girth as the Ganges—
32. (He) whose propitious gift in the thousands, at a speed like the wind's,
    is ready for giving all at once.
33. So then do all our bards always hymn here, away from (the sacrifice) of the stranger,
    Bṛbu, the best giver of thousands, the patron, the best winner of thousands.

VI.46 (487) Indra

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
14 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Like the previous two hymns, this one has too many verses for its position in the Indra cycle, though its division into the two-verse pragātha units may account for its placement. Nonetheless, the hymn seems to be a conceptual unity, rather than a collection of independent pragāthas.

The hymn concentrates on Indra as the helper of his praisers in contests and in battles. He is exhorted to come to our aid, to provide us with protection, to bring

us the power inhering in rival peoples (see especially vss. 7–8), and to help us defeat our foes. The hymn is without major complications, and the theme is more repeated than developed. This regular repetition gives the hymn an unhurried pace, which contrasts with the urgency of the contests and battles described. This pace begins to quicken in the last verses: the repeated phrase introducing an imperative, "So then, as ever" (vss. 10, 11, 12), seems to be building to a finale. But the last pragātha (vss. 13–14), rather than providing the expected climactic plea to Indra for aid that would end the hymn conventionally, is instead a two-verse subordinate clause about Indra and his racing horses that utterly lacks a main clause, and it displays a density of imagery, with unrelated similes piled up pell-mell, that seems designed to replicate the breathless pace of a real contest—a remarkable effect. At the same time, it harkens back to the beginning of the hymn, with its mention of steeds and the racecourse (see vs. 1) and the "great stakes" (see vs. 4), so that the apparently reckless speed and lack of completion of the final two verses is contained within a ring-compositional structure.

1. Because it is just you that we bards call upon at the winning of the prize,
   you, Indra, as master of settlements that our men (call upon) amid obstacles, you at the finish lines of our steed,
2. So you—o dazzling one with mace in hand, o possessor of the stone, being praised as the great one—boldly
   heap up for us cow, horse, and chariotry altogether like a prize for the winner, o Indra.

3. The unbounded one who smites altogether, that Indra do we call upon.
   O you possessing a thousand testicles, of powerful manliness, master of settlements—be there to strengthen us in the combats.
4. Like a bull, you press the peoples hard with your battle fury at the spirited competition, o you who are equal to song.
   Become our helper at the (contest for) great stakes, at (the contest for) our bodies, the waters, and the sun.

5. Indra, bring us the best, the mightiest, fulfilling fame,
   with which you, o dazzling one with mace in hand, fill both these world-halves, o you of good lips.
6. It is you, the mighty conqueror of the bordered domains, that we call upon to help, o king among the gods.
   Make all our things that waver gain foothold and our foes be easily conquered, o good one.

7. The might and manliness that are in the Nahuṣa territories, Indra,
   or the brilliance that belongs to the five settlements—bring them here: all the masculine powers altogether.

8. Or what bullish power is in Tṛkṣi and in the Druhyu people, or whatever is in the Pūru, o bounteous one,
grant that to us fully at (the time of) the conquering of men, for us to vanquish our foes in battles.

9. O Indra, your threefold, triple-armored shelter that provides well-being—
that protection hold out to our benefactors and to me. Keep the arrow away from those
10. Who, with their mind set on cattle, outwit their rival and smite him boldly.
So then, as ever, o bounteous Indra longing for songs, as the protector of our bodies, come up close to us.

11. So then, as ever, be there to strengthen us. Indra, help our leader in the fight,
when the feathered, sharp-headed arrows fly in the midspace,
12. Where champions stretch wide their own dear bodies as shelter for their ancestors.
So then, as ever, hold out protection to our body and lineage. Keep away unforeseen hatred.

13. When, Indra, at the charge, you will spur on your steeds at the (contest for) great stakes,
on an uncrowded (race)course, on its twisting path, like falcons hunting fame,
14. (The steeds) going swiftly like rivers in a torrent when (the chariot?) has sounded following their roar,
who, like birds over raw flesh, keep circling (the racecourse), being held firm in the cow [=leather (reins)] in your two arms…

VI.47 (488) Soma, Indra, etc.

Garga Bhāradvāja
31 verses: triṣṭubh, except bṛhatī 19, anuṣṭubh 23, gāyatrī 24, dvipadā 25, jagatī 27

Like III.53, the family hymn of the Viśvāmitras, dedicated primarily to Indra and placed at the end of the Indra cycle in Maṇḍala III, this hymn is the family hymn of the Bharadvājas, dedicated primarily to Indra and also positioned at the end of the Indra cycle in its maṇḍala. Also like III.53, VI.47 consists of a number of smaller units, some of which seem to have little or no connection with each other. Different scholars have suggested different divisions of the hymn; our own is based in great part on arguments based on rhetoric.

It begins with an extravagant praise of soma (vss. 1–5), rhetorically unified by the oft-repeated pronoun "this one here" (*ayám*), which in several of its occurrences takes an unusual final position (as opposed to its standard initial slot). With the presence of soma unquestionably established, Indra is then invited to drink it in the following verse (6), with the ritual context explicitly identified as the Midday Pressing. In fact already toward the end of the soma verses, there has been a modulation toward Indra: several of the deeds attributed to "this one here" are more Indraic than Somian, especially the propping of heaven in 5cd, and the final words of verse 5 "the bull accompanied by the Maruts" would ordinarily uniquely identify Indra, who is addressed in the next pāda (6a).

The extended middle section of the hymn (vss. 7–21) is entirely devoted to Indra. Verses 7–10 contain a series of direct pleas, for Indra to lead us forward to wider space and a better life and to provide refreshment and a good life. The next three verses (11–13) are similarly general, but couched in the 3rd person. (Two of these verses [12–13] are repeated in a very late hymn, X.131.6–7, and in turn are used in the later Sautrāmaṇī ritual, but we see no direct evidence of that ritual here.) Indra appears in these verses as a sort of universal protector and helper. This characterization seems to raise questions in the poet's mind: if Indra is the protector of all, then how does any particular group get ahead?

This implicit question prompts the next, somewhat jarring, section of the hymn (vss. 14–19), which concerns the fickle and unpredictable way in which Indra's patronage flits from one man to another. The section begins undramatically by announcing the many verbal and ritual offerings to Indra, coming (it seems) from many different groups (vs. 14), all seeking his aid. The next verse (15) seems to treat Indra's capriciousness as a positive trait: he doesn't only and always aid the strong, but will frequently promote a man who has fallen behind. The next two verses (16–17) continue this theme, but with Indra's behavior appearing in a darker light, as he arbitrarily breaks his agreements and betrays his followers. In the following verse (18) Indra is infinitely multiplied, presenting a different appearance to each different group and seemingly possessed of a thousand horses, each pair of which might take him to a different group pleading for his aid. This somewhat disturbing section is brought to a happy end in verse 19: only one pair of horses is yoked (to bring Indra to us?), the various forms are under Tvaṣṭar's control, and in the rhetorical question that forms the second half-verse (matching the question in vs. 15) it is concluded that Indra is unlikely to stay with the enemy when our own patrons are now providing such a good sacrifice. One of the most notable aspects of this little section (esp. vss. 15–18) about Indra's constantly changing behavior is its grammatical reflection: these verses are packed with *āmreḍita* nominal compounds "each x, x after x" and so-called "intensive" verb forms (really iterative-frequentative, meaning "keeps x-ing, continually x-es"), forms that are relatively marked in the Vedic grammatical system. The presence of four āmreḍitas and four intensives in four verses both calls attention to the message and reflects it by portraying a regularly alternating set of actions and objects.

The reassurance of verse 19 has come none too soon, for in verse 20 the poet and his group find themselves in a bad spot, not the wide and bountiful place they prayed Indra to lead them to in verses 7–8. In verse 21 the opposing forces are overcome (by Indra, it seems, though he is unnamed). Thus, verses 7–8 and 20–21 form a larger ring around the Indra section.

A dānastuti follows (vss. 22–25), in which the victorious kings distribute the bounty won in the battle referred to in verse 21. The dānastuti proceeds briskly and efficiently, without any of the jocularity commonly found in dānastutis elsewhere, just a list of the acquisitions.

The last part of the hymn (vss. 26–31) is the strangest. It consists of three verses (26–28) addressed to the war chariot and three (29–31) addressed to the war drum. These verses are also found in the Atharvaveda (VI.125–126). Each of these martial objects is praised in the most extravagant terms and compared with the attributes of the gods. Although this section seems to have no direct connection with the rest of the hymn, it may have been attached to the hymn (or even originally composed as part of it) in response to the battle depicted in verses 20–21 and the distribution of booty in verses 22–25. Chariots are part of the gift (24a), and it would not be surprising that a war drum might be allotted as part of the post-battle distribution. It is also worth remembering that in III.53, the family hymn of the Viśvāmitras mentioned above, one of the final sections (vss. 17–20) is devoted to the possible perils besetting a chariot and its team, with phraseology similar to verses 26–28 in this hymn.

1. Sweet is this one, certainly, and it is honeyed; sharp is this one, certainly, and it is full of sap.
   And now that Indra has drunk of it, no one at all overcomes him at the challenges.
2. This sweet one here was the most exhilarating, on which Indra became exhilarated for the smashing of Vṛtra,
   he who (having performed) many exploits smashed apart the nine and ninety walls of Śambara.
3. This one, when it is drunk, rouses my speech; it has awakened an eager inspired thought.
   This wise one measured out the six broad (realms), from which no world is at a distance.
4. This is the one who created the expanse of the earth; who created the height of heaven is this one here;
   this one (created) the beestings on the three slopes [=worlds?]. Soma upheld the broad midspace.
5. This one found the flood with its brilliant appearance at the (fore)front of the dawns with their gleaming seats.
   This one, great, with a great pillar propped up heaven—he, the bull, accompanied by the Maruts.

6. Boldly drink the soma in the tub, Indra—as smasher of Vṛtra at the confluence of goods, o champion.
   At the Midday Pressing, drench yourself. Standing amid wealth, establish wealth in us.
7. Indra, look forward for us, like the man who goes ahead; lead us further forward, toward a better state.
   Become one of good passage, who gives us passage beyond; become one of good guidance and valued guidance.
8. Lead us along to a wide world, as the one who knows—to sun-filled light, to fearlessness, to well-being.
   High are the arms of you who are stalwart, Indra. Might we approach these two lofty shelters.
9. Place us in the widest chariot box, Indra, on the two best-pulling horses, you possessor of hundreds.
   Convey hither the highest refreshment of refreshments. Let our (refreshment) not cross over to the "riches of the stranger," bounteous one.
10. Indra, be gracious. Seek a means of life for me. Spur on my poetic vision like a blade of copper.
    Whatever I say here in devotion to you, just this enjoy. Make me accompanied by the gods.
11. Indra the protector, Indra the helper, Indra the champion good to call at every call—
    I call on Indra, the able one, called on by many. Let bounteous Indra establish well-being for us.
12. Let Indra be of good protection, of good help with his help, very gracious, affording all possessions.
    Let him thrust away hatred; let him create fearlessness. Might we be lords of good heroes in abundance.
13. Might we be in the favor of him who deserves the sacrifice, in his propitious benevolence.
    Let Indra of good protection, of good help to us keep hatred away even from a distance.
14. Down to you, Indra, run the hymns and the sacred formulations as teams, like a wave along the slopes.
    As broad as your bounty are the many pressings. You join together the waters, the cows, and the drops, you possessor of the mace.
15. Who will praise him, who will fill him, who will sacrifice to him, if the bounteous one would always help only the strong?
    Like one who puts down his two feet one after the other, with his powers he makes the one who was behind to be in front.
16. He is famed as a hero who subdues every strong one, continually leading the one beyond the other in turn.

Hating the flashy, king of both (races [=human and divine]), Indra keeps prodding the clans, the sons of Manu—first one, then the other.

17. He twists away from his partnerships with those in front; continually double-crossing them, he goes with those behind.
    Indra keeps enduring through the many autumns, shaking them [=autumns] off so they don't close in.
18. He has a form corresponding to every form; this form of his is for display.
    Indra keeps going about in many forms through his magical powers, for ten hundred fallow bays are yoked for him.
19. Having yoked the two fallow bay mares to his chariot, Tvaṣṭar rules over the many (forms) here.
    Who will always sit on the side of the hostile—and especially when (our) patrons are sitting (a sacrificial session)?
20. We have come here to a field without pasturage, o gods. Though it was wide, the land has become narrow.
    O Bṛhaspati, o Indra, be on the lookout for a path for the singer who is in this state on his quest for cattle.
21. Day after day he drove off from their seat the other half, the black kindred all of the same appearance.
    The bull smashed the two Dāsas, mercenaries, Varcin and Śambara, at the moated place.

22. Prastoka from your bounty, Indra, has just now given ten casks, ten prizewinners.
    From Divodāsa, (son?) of Atithigva, we have accepted as bounty the goods belonging to Śambara.
23. Ten horses, ten casks, ten garments, with delights on top—
    ten golden balls have I gained from Divodāsa.
24. Ten chariots with side-horses, a hundred cows
    has Aśvatha given to the Atharvans, to Pāyu.
25. The descendant of Sṛñjaya has reached toward the Bharadvājas, who have acquired great bounty belonging to all people.

26. O tree, because you should become firm-limbed, a comrade to us, furthering (us), affording good heroes,
    you are knotted together with cows [=leather (straps)]. Be firm! Let the one who mounts you win what is to be won.
27. Strength has been brought up from heaven, from earth; might has been brought here from the trees.
    To the strongness of the waters enclosed by cows, to the mace of Indra—to the Chariot—sacrifice with an oblation.

28. The mace of Indra, the face of the Maruts, the embryo of Mitra, the navel of Varuṇa—
    taking pleasure in this oblation-giving of ours, god Chariot, accept our oblations.
29. Make Heaven and Earth gasp. Let the moving (world [=living creatures]) dispersed in many places pay attention to you.
    O Drum, along with Indra, with the gods, drive away the rivals farther than far.
30. Roar out your power. Set strength in us. Thunder down, thrusting away difficulties.
    Blast away misfortunes from here, o Drum. You are the fist of Indra: be firm!
31. Drive those yonder [=cows] hither and make the ones here turn back. The Drum keeps speaking, giving the signal.
    Our men, with horses as their wings, are converging: (so) let our charioteers win, o Indra.

VI.48 (489) Agni (1–10), Maruts (11–12, 20–21), Maruts or Liṅgoktadevatās (13–15), Pūṣan (16–19), Maruts or Heaven and Earth or Pr̥śni (22)

Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
22 verses: various lyric meters, arranged for the most part in pragāthas

Another curious hymn, made up of apparently disparate sections and composed in a variety of different lyric meters. The headnote above reproduces the dedicands suggested by the Anukramaṇī, but they do not exactly fit the contents of the hymn. The first ten verses, dedicated to Agni, seem a conventional Agni hymn, the curiosity being that it is not placed among the other Agni hymns. It is also metrically the most stable portion of the hymn, with paired pragātha verses alternating br̥hatī and satobrḥatī, save for verses 6–8, where each verse has an extra eight-syllable pāda at the end.

The next three verses (11–13) offer an odd interlude: the priestly associates of the poet are ordered to drive a cow nearby, who will give milk for the Maruts. Although the Anukramaṇī identifies the Maruts as the dedicands of these verses, they seem incidental. The focus is on the cow—whether as a metaphor for Bharadvāja's poetic inspiration, as a real cow meant to provide the milk to mix with soma in the ongoing sacrifice, or as both. This cow is reminiscent of the apparent cow in the extremely enigmatic verses of the Viśvāmitra family hymn (III.53.15–16), a hymn that occupies a similar place in its maṇḍala.

Pūṣan is the subject of verses 14–19, the heart of the hymn. As Geldner points out, the Bharadvājas have a special relationship with Pūṣan: Maṇḍala VI contains

the only series of hymns devoted to that god (VI.53–58). The first two verses of this section (14–15) present a solemn, formal praise of Pūṣan, who is compared to the great Vedic gods in his various qualities, despite his usual rustic and relatively lowly status. The two verses clearly form a pragātha, though the second of them (vs. 15) has five pādas (12 12 12 8 8) rather than the expected satobr̥hatī (12 8 12 8). After these two straightforward verses, notable only for the hyperbolic encomium of this minor divinity, there follow three verses (16–18) containing a remarkable, intimate address to Pūṣan, whispered into his ear (see 16ab), some of which, especially verse 17, is close to unintelligible. The translation of that verse given here is extremely provisional; what is clear is that the style and syntax are informal, and the poet probably uses idioms and popular sayings current in colloquial speech. Moreover, since it is whispered to Pūṣan, it *should* be unintelligible to us. The final verse devoted to Pūṣan (19), though it remains a 2nd-person address, returns to the high, formal style of the first two (14–15) and is in br̥hatī. It should be noted that the three intimate verses have the same metrical structure as the three verses about the cow (11–13) and share with those verses a certain idiomatic register. Each consists of a sequence of kakubh (8 12 8: vss. 11, 16), satobr̥hatī (12 8 12 8: vss. 12, 17), and puraüṣṇih (12 8 8: vss. 13, 18).

The final three verses (20–22) are dedicated to the Maruts. The first two form another pragātha (20 in the expected br̥hatī, 22 with an extra eight-syllable pāda at the end, like the extended satobr̥hatīs of vss. 6 and 8), while the final verse (22) is in anuṣṭubh. The reason for their position here is unclear. The final verse is enigmatic, as verses referring the Maruts' mother Pr̥śni and their birth often are (cf. II.34.2 and especially nearby VI.66.1), and the hymn, having presented us with a number of puzzles along the way, ends with a final one.

1. With your every sacrifice to Agni, and with your every hymn to his skill,
   we—that is, I—have proclaimed time after time the immortal Jātavedas,
   dear like an ally.
2. The child of nourishment—because he is inclined toward us, that one all
   on his own—we would ritually serve, for the bestowal of oblations.
   He will become our helper in the prize-contests; he will become the
   strengthener and protector of our bodies.

3. Because, Agni, as a great unaging bull, you radiate widely with
   your beam,
   constantly flaming up with your untiring flame, o flame-bright one, shine
   bright with your bright lights.
4. You sacrifice to the great gods: sacrifice in due order with your resolve
   and wondrous power.
   Bring them nearby for help, Agni. Bestow prizes and win them.

5. Whom the waters, the stones, and the trees carry to term as the embryo
   of truth,

who is born, when he is churned mightily by men, on the back of the earth,

6. Who has filled both world-halves with his radiance, he races to heaven with his smoke;
he is seen across the darkness in the nights, a ruddy bull among the dusky ones,
a ruddy bull toward the dusky ones.

7. With your lofty beams, o Agni—with your flaming flame, o god,
when kindled at Bharadvāja's, o youngest one, richly light up for us, o flaming one,
brilliantly light up, o pure one.

8. You are houselord of all the clans stemming from Manu, o Agni.
With your hundred strongholds, o youngest one, protect your kindler from narrow straits for a hundred winters,
and protect those who give to your praisers.

9. You good one, conspicuous by your help, impel bounties to us.
Of this wealth here you are the charioteer, Agni. Find a ford for our progeny.

10. Deliver our progeny and posterity to the further shore, with deliverers who are undeceivable and not absent-minded.
O Agni, keep godly rages away from us and ungodly tangles.

11. Comrades, drive near a juice-yielding milk-cow with your newer speech.
Send one who doesn't kick—

12. Who will milk out undying fame for the self-radiant troop of Maruts,
who is in the grace of the precipitous Maruts, who goes her own way with benevolent thoughts.

13. For Bharadvāja, once again, milk both a milk-cow yielding all milk
and refreshment yielding all nourishment.

14. Strong-willed like Indra, master of artifice like Varuṇa,
gladdening and yielding lush nourishment like Aryaman, just like Viṣṇu—that one will I praise for you, to mark him out—

15. Turbulent like the troop of Maruts, powerfully noisy, without assailant—Pūṣan (I praise), so that hundreds,
thousands (of goods) he will heap together from the settled domains.
He will make the hidden goods visible; he will make goods easy for us to find.

16. Run up to me, Pūṣan. I will announce close to your ear, o glowing one:
"Evil are the hostilities of the stranger.

17. "Don't tear out the Kākambīra tree—pursue the taunts and make them disappear!

And certainly don't (tear off the wheel) of the sun: for thus never could you give pursuit to the one who 'puts the necks' (of the horses to the chariot-pole?).

18. "Let (us) have a partnership that keeps the wolf away, with you who are like a leather bag—
an unsplit one that holds curds, a well-filled one that holds curds."

19. For you are beyond mortals and equal with the gods in your splendor.
Keep an eye on us in our battles, Pūsan. Help us now, just as before.

20. O you shakers, let (us) have the valuable guidance of a valuable one and let there be the liberal spirit
either of a god or of a mortal who has sacrificed, o Maruts who receive the forefront of the sacrifice.

21. He whose acclaim goes around heaven even in a single day, like the god Sun,
the Maruts assume his vibrant power, his sacrificial name—his Vr̥tra-smashing power, his preeminent Vr̥tra-smashing power.

22. Only once was Heaven born; only once was Earth born.
Only once was the milk of Pr̥śni milked. Another (of the Maruts) is not born after this.

VI.49 (490) All Gods

R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except śakvarī 15

A hymn of straightforward structure, typical of many All God hymns: each verse praises a single god (or divine entity, like the pair Night and Dawn [vs. 3] or the group of Maruts [vs. 11]). Most verses name the god in question, though the name can be postponed till late in the verse, as in verse 2 dedicated to Agni or verse 8 to Pūṣan, whose name is the last word in the verse. Two do not name the god at all: verse 3 to Night and Dawn and verse 12 to Indra. The riddling technique of postponing or omitting the name of an entity defined by the verse is of course common in R̥gvedic rhetoric, and its use in All God catalogues is especially appropriate.

There is no obvious ritual or other significance to the order of gods in this hymn, though many of the parties to the Morning Pressing occur early in the hymn: Agni (vs. 2), Night and Dawn (vs. 3), Vāyu (vs. 4), Aśvins (vs. 5). On the other hand, the verse dedicated to Indra (12), a regular participant in the dawn ritual, is late in the hymn, though he is obliquely present, with the Maruts, in 6cd. No god receives more than a single verse, though, as just mentioned, Indra and the Maruts have a presence in the Parjanya and Vāta [=Thunder and Wind] verse (6), as Agni does

in the Mitra and Varuṇa verse (1) and in the Tvaṣṭar verse (9). The reference shifts between the 3rd and 2nd person, with the former predominating. The final verse of the hymn, in a slightly different meter (triṣṭubh but with an extra pāda), mentions no specific gods, but asks all of them for benefits.

1. I will praise the people of good commandment with newer hymns, will praise Mitra and Varuṇa the gracious.
   Let them come hither; let them listen here—those of good dominion, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni.
2. The one to be reverently invoked at the ceremonies of every clan, of undistracted resolve, the spoked wheel of the two youthful ones [=Heaven and Earth],
   the child of Heaven, the son of strength—Agni—the ruddy beacon of the sacrifice (I invoke) to perform sacrifice.
3. The two daughters of the ruddy one, differing in form: the one is ornamented with stars, the other is the sun's.
   The two pure ones, transiting alternately, wandering apart—being hymned they both approach the prayerful thought once it is heard.
4. A lofty inspired thought (goes) forth to Vāyu, who, possessing lofty wealth and all valuables, fills the chariot.
   Having a brilliant course, master of teams, as poet you seek to reach the poet, you who are worshiped at the forefront of the sacrifice.
5. That seems to me a wonder—the chariot of the Aśvins, radiant, yoked with mind,
   by which you two, Nāsatyas, superior men, drive your circuit, for our descendants and ourselves to prosper.
6. Parjanya [/Thunder] and Vāta [/Wind], you two bulls of the earth, quicken the watery outpourings (for him [=human poet])
   through whose hymns—you poets who really hear [=Maruts] and you mounter of the moving world [=Indra]—you made the moving world your own.
7. The daughter of Pavīru, the maiden with a brilliant lifespan, Sarasvatī, whose husband is a hero, will confer poetic insight.
   Together with the (divine) ladies she will hold out to the singer unbroken shelter, protection difficult to assail.
8. I will direct my eloquence to the complete protector of every path. Prompted by desire, he has attained the chant.
   He will bestow on us proliferating riches tipped with gold; he will cause every visionary thought to reach its goal—Pūṣan.
9. To him who receives the first portion, the glorious conferrer of vigor, the skillful god with lovely palms and lovely hands
   who deserves the sacrifice of the dwelling places—to Tvaṣṭar easy to invoke will far-radiant Agni, the Hotar, sacrifice.

10. The father of creation: with these hymns strengthen Rudra by day, Rudra by night;
 the lofty, high, ageless, very gracious one would we invoke separately, roused by the poet.
11. You youths, poets deserving the sacrifice, you Maruts—come hither in response to the singer's longing for space,
 for you in your strength quicken even (a place) without brightness, approaching in just the same way as to Aṅgiras, you superior men.
12. Forth to the hero, forth to the powerful, precipitous one will I drive (praise?), as a guardian of livestock drives his flocks home.
 He will make the inspired words of the speaker touch the body of him who is famed, as one makes the firmament touched by stars.
13. He who measured out the earthly realms three times exactly, for Manu, who was hard-pressed—Viṣṇu—
 in this shelter of yours (still) being offered might we rejoice with wealth, with life and lineage.
14. Let Ahi Budhnya take delight in this (praise?) of ours, along with the waters and the chants; in this let the Mountain, in this let Savitar take delight;
 let the Gift-Escorts, let Fortune, let Plenitude quicken this along with the plants, for wealth.
15. Now to us give wealth in chariots, filling the settled domains, consisting of many heroes, the herdsmen of great truth;
 give ageless peaceful dwelling (and that) with which we will trample upon the (other) peoples, the godless contenders,
 with which we will take on the godless clans.

VI.50 (491) All Gods

R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja
15 verses: triṣṭubh

Unlike the last hymn, with its tidy organization allotting one verse per god, this All God hymn casts a wider and more inclusive net with multiple gods sometimes mixed in a single verse, some gods given more than one verse (Maruts, vss. 4–5), and marginally divinized figures, like the Waters (vs. 7), also addressed. The first verse establishes this messy inclusiveness, calling on Aditi, the three principal Ādityas (Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman), Agni, Savitar, Bhaga, and the "rescuer gods," who may, but need not be, the Maruts. The hymn also has a more direct and intimate feel than VI.49: although both hymns mix 2nd-person and 3rd-person reference to the gods, in VI.50 the 2nd person predominates, in contrast to VI.49, and the 2nd-person invocations in VI.50 more often contain

imperatives and requests in the optative, in contrast to the generally descriptive clauses of VI.49.

Another noteworthy feature is the relative prominence of female divinities. Again, the first verse sets the scene by placing Aditi first. Besides Earth, in the pair Heaven and Earth (vs. 3), we find Rodasī (vs. 5), the motherly Waters (vs. 7), Sarasvatī (vs. 12), the Wives of the Gods, associated with Tvaṣṭar (vs. 13), and Earth again (vss. 13–14). The divine ladies end the hymn (vs. 15).

1. I call upon goddess Aditi for you with reverences, on Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, for mercy,
   on Aryaman the very well-disposed, who gives without being begged, on the rescuer gods, on Savitar and Bhaga.
2. O very great Sun, pursue the gods of good light whose father is skill, in (witness to our) blamelessness—
   they who have two births, the trusty ones who serve the truth, sunlit, worthy of worship, having Agni as their tongue.
3. And, Heaven and Earth, you two very gracious world-halves—you will make broad, lofty dominion as shelter
   great(ly), so that there will be a faultless wide realm for our peaceful dwelling, you two Holy Places.
4. Let the sons of Rudra incline themselves to us here, the unassailable good ones invoked today,
   since we, placed in petty or in great distress, have called upon the Maruts, the gods—
5. The ones to whom the goddess Rodasī is joined, on whom Pūṣan attends, sharing the sacrifice by halves.
   O Maruts, when, on having heard our call, you make your drive, the worlds tremble at your agitated course.
6. Chant to this hero who has a yearning for songs—to Indra with a new sacred formulation, o singer.
   He will hear the call. While being praised and being greatly hymned, he will give rewards.
7. O Waters belonging to Manu, establish unimpaired succor as luck and lifetime for our offspring and descendants.
   For you are the most motherly healers, the begetters of everything still and moving.
8. God Savitar, who gives protection, should come hither to us—the golden-palmed one deserving the sacrifice,
   who, rich in gifts, like the face of Dawn discloses valuables to the pious.
9. And you, Son of Strength—you should turn the gods hither to us today to this ceremony here.
   Might I be always within (the sphere of) your giving; by your help might I possess good heroes, Agni.

10. And you Nāsatyas should come here to my summons with your insightful thoughts—you certainly are inspired poets.
    (As you did) Atri from great darkness, release (me)—triumph, men!—from difficulty at close quarters.
11. Become for us givers of wealth that is brilliant, rich in prizes, in men, in much livestock.
    Showing favor, o gods—the heavenly, earthly, cow-born, and watery ones—be merciful.
12. Let those who grant rewards be merciful to us in concord—Rudra and Sarasvatī, Viṣṇu, Vāyu,
    the Master of the R̥bhus, Vāja, the divine Distributor. Let Parjanya [/Thunder] and Vāta [/Wind] swell refreshments for us.
13. And this god Savitar and Bhaga and the Child of the Waters—let (each) help us, supplying gifts,
    and Tvaṣṭar jointly with the divine ones, the Wives, Heaven with the gods, Earth with the seas.
14. And let Ahi Budhnya hear us and Aja Ekapad, Earth, Sea,
    and all the gods, strong through truth, when they are invoked and praised. Let the solemn utterances, pronounced by poets, help (us).
15. In just this way the Bharadvājas, the descendants of me, this Mamata, chant with their insightful thoughts, with their chants.
    The (divine) ladies, the unassailable good ones who are offered to—all of you be praised, you who deserve the sacrifice.

VI.51 (492) All Gods

R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja
16 verses: triṣṭubh 1–12, uṣṇih 13–15, anuṣṭubh 16

This sixteen-verse hymn falls metrically into three quite unequal portions: 1–12, 13–15, and 16. On the basis of both structure and content, it appears that these were originally at least two separate hymns. Verses 1–12 are unitary in tone, and the central, responsive verses 6–7 can be interpreted as an omphalos, supported by various lexical rings. (Oldenberg [1888: 199–200], however, divides these twelve verses into four tr̥ca hymns.)

The hymn so defined differs markedly from the last two All God hymns (VI.49–50), which catalogue a series of gods and their attributes in an unordered list. This hymn, in contrast, is highly reminiscent of the Mitra, Varuṇa, and Sūrya hymns in Maṇḍala VII (VII.60–63), in which the Sun surveys the human world and bears witness to Mitra and Varuṇa about the innocence and guilt of men. Like those hymns, this begins with the rising of the sun (vss. 1–2); it then turns to praise of the Ādityas. The emphasis is on their truth and lack of deceit—Ādityan preoccupations.

The omphalos verses (6–7), marked by initial repeated *mā́* "don't!," beg the gods not to subject us to undeserved punishment, thus implicitly claiming our innocence, which should be visible to the all-seeing Sun (though the final pāda of the following vs. 8 seems to allow the possibility of a modicum of guilt). The remaining five verses (8–12) return to the theme of the truthful gods, with somewhat more insistent prayers for grace and help. Toward the end, in verse 11, a larger group of gods is named: invocations of additional gods at the end of a hymn are very common. The last verse (12), naming the priestly family and summarizing the content and intent of the hymn that precedes it, is a typical final verse.

The remaining verses (13–16) may have been appended to this hymn because they chiefly concern various malefactors whom we wish to banish or destroy, including the cheat (*ripú*, vs. 13) and the (clearly human) "wolf" (*vṛ́ka*, vs. 14), both of which were also mentioned as dangers in the omphalos verses ("cheat" vs. 7, "wolf" vs. 6).

1. Up goes this great eye of Mitra and of Varuṇa—dear and undeceivable.
   The blazing, sightly face of truth has flashed forth on its rising like the bright ornament of heaven.
2. The inspired poet who knows their three divisions and the breeds of the gods far away and here,
   who sees the straight and the crooked among mortals, the Sun looks upon the ways of the stranger.
3. I will praise you, the great herdsmen of truth: Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa, the well-born ones.
   Aryaman, Bhaga, those of undeceivable inspired thoughts, the pure companions, do I call here.
4. Those who care for the stranger, the lords of settlements, undeceivable, the great kings, givers of good dwelling,
   the youths of good rule ruling over Heaven, the superior men—the Ādityas I beseech and Aditi, in quest of friendship.
5. O Father Heaven, Mother Earth lacking the lie, Brother Agni, good ones—have mercy on us.
   All you Ādityas and Aditi jointly—spread out ample shelter for us.
6. Don't make us subject to the wolf, to the she-wolf, to any at all who wishes us ill, o you who deserve the sacrifice,
   for you are the charioteers of our bodies and you have become (the charioteers) of (our?) skillful speech.
7. Don't let us pay for the offense done to you by another; don't let us do that which you avenge, o good ones,
   for you rule over all, All Gods. Let the cheat harm his own body.
8. Reverence is powerful. I seek to attract reverence here. Reverence upholds heaven and earth.
   Reverence to the gods; reverence is master of them. With reverence I seek to redeem even an offense committed.

9. You charioteers of truth who possess refined skill, settled in the dwelling places of truth, undeceivable,
all you great superior men of broad gaze do I bend here with reverences, o you who deserve the sacrifice.
10. For they possess the best luster and they lead us across all difficulties—
those of good rule, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, whose inspired thoughts are truth, who are in reality rulers of speech.
11. They strengthen our earthly realm—Indra, Earth, Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aditi, the Five Peoples.
Affording good shelter, good help, good guidance, let them be good herdsmen for us, offering us good protection.
12. To attain the one whose seat is in heaven, o gods, the Hotar of the Bhāradvājas now begs for favor.
Sacrificing with the ritual meals set here, desiring goods, he has extolled the breeds of the gods.

13. Away with this crooked, cheating, ill-intentioned thief, o Agni.
Make an easy passage for him far, far away, o lord of settlements.
14. Surely our pressing stones have bellowed for your companionship, Soma.
Smash down the rapacious niggard. For he is a wolf!
15. Because you of good drops, with Indra preeminent, are heaven-bound,
make good passage for us on the road. (Be) herdsmen at home.
16. We have gone on the faultless path leading to well-being,
on which one avoids all hatreds and finds goods.

VI.52 (493) All Gods

Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
17 verses: triṣṭubh 1–6, gāyatrī 7–12, triṣṭubh 13, jagatī 14, triṣṭubh 15–17, generally arranged in tṛcas

This final, seventeen-verse hymn of the short All God cycle of Maṇḍala VI is metrically and thematically non-unified, and probably consists of originally separate pieces later joined together. (So also Oldenberg 1888: 199–200.) The first twelve verses divide into four tṛcas, the first two in one meter, the second two in another. The first tṛca (vss. 1–3) inveighs against a rival sacrificer and calls on the Maruts and Soma to destroy him, in lively and imaginative terms. In style, though not in meter, it more closely resembles verses 13–15 of the preceding hymn VI.51 than what follows. The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) is more staid, but notable for calling on not only the standard deities but also on natural phenomena for aid. The remainder of the hymn is generic and somewhat repetitive, urging the gods in general to hear our calls and partake of our sacrifice. Relatively few gods are mentioned by name; there

is instead an effort to include all the gods, whatever their current or original location (see esp. vss. 13, 15). After the first two tr̥cas, the language is for the most part easy and without much character.

1. Not by Heaven nor by Earth do I concede this, not by my sacrifice and not by these ritual labors.
   Let the well-founded mountains crush him. Let the sacrificer of an excessive sacrifice be bent double.
2. Whoever disdains us, Maruts, or will scorn our sacred formulation as it is being performed,
   let his twisted (ways) be twisting, scorching (flames) for him. Let Heaven blaze at him who hates the formulation.
3. Do they not (call) you, o Soma, the herdsman of the sacred formulation? Do they not call you our protector from taunt?
   Do you not see us being scorned? Hurl your scorching lance at the hater of the formulation!

4. Let the dawns help me as they are being born; let the rivers help me as they are swelling.
   Let the steadfast mountains help me; let the forefathers help me at the invocation of the gods.
5. Might we always be of good mind; might we look now upon the sun as it rises:
   so shall he arrange it—he who is lauded over the gods as goods-lord of goods, as the most welcome arrival because of his help.
6. Indra the most welcome arrival in the nearest nearness because of his help; Sarasvatī swelling with the (other) rivers;
   Parjanya—joy itself for us with his plants; Agni good to proclaim, good to call on, like a father.

7. All you gods, come here. Hear this call of mine.
   Sit down here on this ritual grass.
8. The one who attends to you with a ghee-backed oblation, o gods—
   you all come close to him.
9. Let the sons of the immortal one listen to our hymns.
   Let them be very merciful to us.

10. Let all the gods, strong through truth, hearing the calls in their turns,
    enjoy the associated milk.
11. Let Indra along with his Marut-flock, let Mitra and Aryaman along with Tvaṣṭar,
    enjoy the praise song and these oblations of ours.
12. O Agni, Hotar, perform this ceremony as sacrifice for us according to its patterns,
    as one who attends to the divine folk.

13. All you gods, hear this call of mine—you who are in the midspace or you who are in heaven,
you who have Agni as your tongue or you who are the means of sacrifice. Having sat on this ritual grass here, bring yourselves to exhilaration.
14. Let all the gods deserving the sacrifice hear me; let both world-halves and the Child of the Waters hear my thought.
Let me not speak speeches to you that can be disregarded. Might we, in nearest contact with you, reach exhilaration just on your favors.
15. Whichever great ones, snake-sly, were born on the earth or in the seat of heaven or of the waters,
let those gods seek a wide place for us to prosper day and night for our whole lifetime.
16. O Agni and Parjanya, help my insightful thought, our lovely praise at this call here, you who are easy to call.
The one begets the refreshing drink, the other the embryo. Confer refreshments accompanied by offspring on us.
17. When the ritual grass has been strewn, when the fire is being kindled, I seek to entice (them) here with a hymn, with great reverence.
At this rite of ours here today, all you gods deserving the sacrifice, bring yourselves to exhilaration on the oblation.

VI.53 (494) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 8

Pūṣan is a favorite minor god of the Bharadvājas: this short Pūṣan sequence (VI.53–58) is the only series of hymns dedicated to Pūṣan in the Ṛgveda. This particular hymn begins with gentle and positive requests of the god (vss. 1–2), but quickly becomes more bloodthirsty, seeking Pūṣan's punishment against stingy patrons. The instruments of punishment are the homely tools of Pūṣan, his awl (vss. 5–8) and goad (vs. 9). Despite the apparent viciousness of the actions urged on Pūṣan, the short lines, repeated phrases, colloquial expressions, and phonetic figures (what is translated anachronistically as "shred them, make them shrapnel" in vss. 7–8 is in Sanskrit the delightful *ā́ rikha kikirā́ kṛṇu*) give a light texture and playful feeling to the hymn.

1. We have yoked you, o lord of the path—like a chariot for prize-winning—
for poetic vision, o Pūṣan.
2. Lead us toward goods stemming from men, toward a hero who has offered a ritual gift,
toward a houselord of value.

3. Even one who doesn't want to give, o glowing Pūṣan—impel him to give.
   Soften up the mind even of the niggard.
4. Clear out the paths for prize-winning; smash away the negligent.
   Let our poetic visions reach their goal, o strong one.
5. Bore around the hearts of the niggards with an awl, you poet.
   And make them subject to us.
6. Thrust through (them) with an awl, Pūṣan. Seek what is dear to the heart of the niggard.
   And make him subject to us.
7. Shred them, make them shrapnel—the hearts of the niggards, you poet.
   And make them subject to us.
8. The awl that you carry, which impels the sacred formulation, o glowing Pūṣan,
   with it shred the heart of each one, make it shrapnel.
9. Your goad with its cow [=leather] "headband" [=strap] that sends the livestock to their goal, glowing one,
   we implore the favor of this (goad) of yours.
10. And make our poetic vision cow-winning for us, horse-winning, and prize-winning,
    make it manfully to be pursued.

VI.54 (495) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: gāyatrī

Pūṣan is here in his role as protector of livestock and finder of lost things, especially cows.

1. Pūṣan, lead (us) together with one who knows, who will direct (us) aright,
   who will say "just here it is."
2. Might we come together with Pūṣan, who will direct (us) to the houses,
   and who will say "just here they are."
3. Pūṣan's wheel does not suffer harm, nor does his (wagon's) cask fall down,
   nor his wheel-rim waver.
4. Whoever has done honor to him with an oblation, him Pūṣan does not neglect.
   He is the first to acquire goods.
5. Let Pūṣan follow after the cows for us; let Pūṣan protect the steeds;
   let Pūṣan win the prize for us.

6. Pūṣan, go forth after the cows of him who sacrifices and presses (soma),
   and of us who praise (you).
7. Let none disappear; let none be harmed, let none get fractured in a hole.
   But with unharmed (cows) come here.
8. Pūṣan who listens, the take-charge one whose possessions never get lost,
   him holding sway over wealth do we beseech for wealth.
9. Pūṣan, under your commandment might we never suffer harm.
   We here are your praisers.
10. (Even) from a distance let Pūṣan place his right hand around (us);
    let him drive our lost (livestock) back to us again.

VI.55 (496) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī

This little hymn is noteworthy for its structure, with a lexical chain knitting the verses together: each verse, except the last (6), contains at least one word or phrase from the preceding verse. The last verse does contain a phonological echo of the preceding one: "brother" in verse 5 (*bhrā́tā*) is echoed by the last word of verse 6 ("bearing" *bíbhrataḥ*).

It is also noteworthy for the startling, but oddly offhand and uncensorious, allusion to incest in verses 4–5, where Pūṣan is identified as the lover of his sister and the wooer of his mother. This follows on three verses (1–3) seeking Pūṣan as charioteer and giver of wealth, and after the incest verses the poet returns to the chariot motif to end the hymn (vs. 6). What the poet is alluding to is Pūṣan's alleged marriage to Sūryā, Daughter of the Sun, glancingly mentioned in nearby VI.58.4 as well as in X.26.6.

1. Come here! Let us two, o child of release, glowing one, together
   accompany each other.
   Become the charioteer of truth for us.
2. The best charioteer, with braided hair, holding sway over great bounty,
   the companion of wealth we beseech for wealth.
3. You are a stream of wealth, glowing one, a heap of goods, you with goats
   as horses,
   the companion of every visionary.
4. Pūṣan who has goats for horses let us now approach with praise—the
   prizewinner,
   who is said to be the lover of his sister.
5. The wooer of his mother I have spoken to: let the lover of his sister
   hear us,
   brother of Indra, companion to me.

6. Let the trusty [?] goats draw Pūṣan on his chariot, him who brings (all) to readiness *with his sharp (goad),
   they bearing the god.

VI.56 (497) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 6

This hymn has several elements familiar from the previous Pūṣan hymns: he is "the best charioteer" (vs. 2, cf. VI.55.2); he helps the thoughts of poets reach their goal (vs. 4, cf. VI.53.4); he helps us win the prize of cattle (vs. 5, cf. VI.53.4, 10).

There are several novelties in the hymn as well. The hymn begins by naming Pūṣan as "porridge-eater" in an enigmatic construction. Porridge is indeed well known from elsewhere as Pūṣan's characteristic food (see, e.g., VI.57.2 in the next hymn), but is the last phrase of verse 1 an ominous warning, as some have taken it (Pūṣan will be insulted), or a positive indication of Pūṣan's eagerness to respond, as others have (he doesn't need to be invited twice, when porridge is mentioned)? We think that it is neither one; rather, "porridge eater" is such a unique designation for Pūṣan that a poet need provide no further clues to identify him.

In verse 2 Indra appears as Pūṣan's companion; this partnership is further developed in the next hymn, VI.57. The third verse is the most puzzling of the hymn. Nothing further is known about this story—if it is a story—of Pūṣan, the Sun's chariot wheel, and the gray cow, though we suspect that it is connected with the extremely puzzling nearby verse VI.48.17, also of Pūṣan. If so, this associates Pūṣan with Indra in the tearing off of the wheel of the Sun's chariot, a myth found in scattered pieces elsewhere. The "gray cow" may also be a naturalistic reference to a cloudy dawn twilight, with the sun rising through it. Whatever lies behind it, the image is striking.

1. Whoever will designate him, Pūṣan, as "porridge-eater,"
   by him the god (need) not be designated (again).
2. And he is the best charioteer. With him as partner and yokemate, the lord of settlements,
   Indra, keeps smashing obstacles.
3. And yonder golden wheel of the Sun
   he set down in the "gray cow"—he the best charioteer.
4. What today we will say to you, much praised wondrous counselor,
   make that thought of ours reach its goal.
5. And make this cow-seeking troop of ours reach its goal for winning.
   From afar, Pūṣan, you are famed.
6. We beg of you well-being that keeps evil afar and goods nearby,
   for wholeness today and for wholeness tomorrow.

VI.57 (498) Indra and Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Indra and Pūṣan are invoked together at the very beginning of this hymn, in a construction (the dual dvandva) that implies habitual intimacy. In the next two verses (2–3) their contrastive attributes are used as definitional descriptors; in verse 2 Indra is the first identified, while in verse 3 the order is the opposite. The end of verse 3 and verse 4 seem to background Pūṣan while foregrounding Indra's great deeds, but the final two verses (5–6) return them to equality, and indeed in both verses Pūṣan is mentioned first, with Indra almost an afterthought. The implied equipoise between the two gods would of course be amusing to a Vedic audience, given the sharp distinction between their importance in the pantheon.

In the translation we have retained as much as possible the order of the elements, even though this violates normal English patterns, because the balance between the two gods and their qualities is conveyed by their careful stationing in the verse.

1. Indra and Pūṣan would we—for partnership, for well-being—
   call upon—for prize-winning.
2. Soma has the one sat down to, to drink it pressed in the two cups.
   Porridge does the other one desire.
3. Goats are the draft-animals for the one; two fallow bay horses, fully
      equipped, are for the other;
   along with those two (horses) he keeps smashing obstacles.
4. When Indra the most bullish led the streams, the great waters,
   then Pūṣan came along.
5. The benevolence of Pūṣan—like the branch of a tree—
   and that of Indra we seize hold of.
6. We ease up on Pūṣan—like a charioteer the reins—
   and Indra, for great well-being.

VI.58 (499) Pūṣan

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2

This last hymn in the Pūṣan cycle in Maṇḍala VI is the only one in trimeter meter, rather than the less formal dimeter. It pictures Pūṣan in a more cosmic context than the previous hymns and ascribes rather more powers to him. The final verse (4), probably with verse 3, refers to the apparent marriage of Pūṣan to Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, a tale alluded to in passing earlier in this cycle.

1. The one of yours is gleaming, the other of yours belongs to the sacrifice: the two day(-halves [=night and day]) of dissimilar form. You are like heaven,
   for you give aid to all magical powers, o autonomous one. Let your giving be propitious here, Pūṣan.
2. Having goats as his horses, protecting livestock, granting a house full of prizes, quickening poetic vision, fitted into all creation,
   Pūṣan the god, always brandishing his pliant goad, goes speeding, as he surveys the creatures.
3. The ships of yours that are in the sea, the golden ones that wander in the midspace,
   with these you travel on a mission of the Sun, o you prompted by desire, as you seek fame.
4. Pūṣan has good lineage from Heaven and from Earth, lord of refreshment, bounteous, of wondrous luster,
   whom the gods gave to Sūryā, him prompted by desire, powerful, of lovely outlook.

VI.59 (500) Indra and Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
10 verses: br̥hatī 1–6, anuṣṭubh 7–10

As has been discussed elsewhere, despite the major roles each of these gods plays in the R̥gveda, Indra and Agni have little in common ritually or mythologically. Nonetheless, eleven hymns are dedicated jointly to them. In this particular hymn, the pairing is insisted upon: every verse has a form of the dual dvandva compound "Indra-Agni." Moreover, their kinship and joint birth is the subject of the first two verses, which, as many scholars have claimed, may be conceptually connected to the murky hymn X.124, possibly concerning the defeat of the Asuras (the Fathers of vs. 1 in this hymn?) by the Devas or gods. Elsewhere in the R̥gveda there is no evidence for a family connection between Indra and Agni.

As in some other Indra-Agni hymns, Agni is assimilated to Indra at least in the early verses, since Indra has the more dynamic mythology. The standard promise to Indra to "proclaim (his) manly deeds" is made to Indra and Agni in verse 1; soma is offered to them in verses 1, 3 and 4, though it is really Indra's drink; and they are both said to possess the mace, Indra's weapon, in verse 3. The balance changes somewhat in verses 5–6. The two gods are separated and, though not named, are identified by their characteristics. The second hemistich of 5 refers to Agni alone, and in verse 6, after a reference to Dawn and her cows, probably alluding to the Morning Pressing where Agni is kindled and Indra appears, the second half-verse contrasts Agni (pāda c) and Indra (pāda d).

This brings to an end the first division of the hymn as defined metrically, and this portion forms a satisfactory unit celebrating the gods and offering them praise and soma. The last four verses, also metrically unified, make the singer's requests, for aid against enemies (vss. 7–8) and for wealth (vs. 9), and again invite them with praise and soma (vs. 10). Despite the metrical division, which corresponds to a functional and thematic difference, there is no reason to consider this a composite hymn, *pace* Oldenberg (1888: 200). It conforms to a common pattern: praise and then requests, and the shorter dimeter meter of the last four verses is appropriate to the specific requests, in contrast to the rhetorically more formal praise section in the lyric bṛhatī.

1. I shall now proclaim, when (soma drinks) have been pressed for you, the manly deeds that you two have done.
   Slain are your fathers whose rivals were the gods, but, o Indra and Agni, you are (still) alive.
2. Yes indeed! It is just so: your greatness is most to be marveled at, Indra and Agni.
   Your begetter was the same: you two are brothers, twins (though) with one mother here, one there.
3. The two who are accustomed to the pressed (soma), like a pair of teamed horses to their fodder,
   Indra and Agni, both possessing the mace, the two gods, we call here with their aid.
4. Indra and Agni, whoever will praise you, strong through truth, at these pressings—
   you two will never snap at one who speaks (such) a pleasurable speech, you gods who receive substantial oblations.
5. O gods Indra and Agni, what mortal shall perceive *this one* of you two?
   The single one, (though) having yoked his horses facing in all directions, goes speeding on the same chariot.
6. Indra and Agni, this footless one here [=Dawn] has gone in front of the footed ones [=cows?].
   While (this one [=Agni],) having left his head behind, constantly chattering with his tongue, goes wandering, (this one [=Indra?]) has trodden down thirty with his foot.

7. Indra and Agni, since gallant men are drawing their bows in their arms,
   do not shun us in this (contest) for great stakes, in our quests for cattle.
8. Indra and Agni, the evil hostilities of the stranger scorch me.
   Make hatreds stay far away from here; keep (him) away from the sun.
9. Indra and Agni, in you are heavenly and earthly goods.
   Extend to us here wealth that brings lifelong prosperity.

10. O Indra and Agni whose conveyance is hymns, who listen to the summons through our praise songs,
through all our songs—come here to drink this soma.

VI.60 (501) Indra and Agni

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
15 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, gāyatrī 4–12, triṣṭubh 13, br̥hatī 14, anuṣṭubh 15, arranged in tr̥cas

This Indra-Agni hymn, organized into tr̥cas, begins with three verses in trimeter meter notable for the tendency to address Indra and Agni separately, each in the vocative singular, though they receive joint epithets, are referred to by shared pronouns, and are generally, but not exclusively (see vs. 2d), the subjects of dual verbs. Our translation reflects this peculiar disjunction of vocatives. This separate address is not characteristic of the rest of the hymn, where the dual dvandva compound "Indra-Agni" (or, once, a conjoined phrase "Indra and Agni," vs. 12) is found in nine of the remaining twelve verses, and the last tr̥ca begins with a verse (13) containing four occurrences of the explicit adjective "(you) both" (*ubhā́*).

The content of the praise is generic, with a tendency toward Indraic deeds and qualities (see esp. vss. 3, 6). The second-to-last tr̥ca treats the two gods separately, without naming them: Agni in verse 10, Indra in verse 11, and a return to joint reference in verse 12. The final triplet (vss. 13–15) is in three different meters, and it has been suggested that it did not originally belong to the rest of the hymn. However, notice that the return to longer lines matches the meter of the first tr̥ca, and there are also verbal responsions with the first three verses, so that a ring-compositional structure is sketched. The strong emphasis on the unified front presented by the two gods in verses 13–15 contrasts implicitly with the separate address in the first tr̥ca, and may hint that our own hymn has brought about the close cooperation between the two gods that will benefit us.

1. He pierces the obstacle and wins the prize who will serve Indra and Agni, the mighty ones
who have control over abundant goods, the two most mighty with their might as they seek the victory prize.
2. You two, do battle for cows now, o Indra, for the waters, the sun, and the dawns who were carried (away), o Agni.
The quarters, the sun, the brilliant dawns, o Indra—the waters, the cows, do you, o Agni, as teamster hitch up as your team.
3. O you two obstacle-smashers, with your obstacle-smashing tempests, o Indra, drive our direction, o Agni, by reason of our reverences.
You two, with unstinting, highest bounties, o Indra, be here for us, o Agni.

4. I call upon these two whose every previous deed is admired.
   Indra and Agni do not neglect (us).
5. The two strong ones who hew apart the negligent, Indra and Agni, do we call upon.
   They will be gracious to such as us.
6. They smash the Ārya obstacles; they smash those of the Dāsa—the two lords of settlements;
   they smash away all hatreds.

7. O Indra and Agni, these praises here have roared to you two.
   Drink the pressed (soma), you who are luck itself.
8. Those much-sought-after teams of yours which are for the pious, you superior men,
   come here with those, o Indra and Agni.
9. With those come here, you superior men, up to this pressing pressed here,
   o Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.

10. Reverently invoke him who with his flame embraces all the trees,
    who makes them black with his tongue.
11. The mortal who, when (the ritual fire) has been kindled, seeks to win the favor of Indra,
    (for him Indra makes) the waters easy to cross for brilliance.
12. You two, deliver to us refreshments accompanied by prizes, and deliver (to safety) swift steeds
    to convey Indra and Agni.

13. You both, Indra and Agni, are to be called upon; both together are to invigorate yourselves on bounty.
    You both are givers of refreshments, of riches; you both do I call upon to win the victory prize.
14. Come here close to us with bovine and equine goods.
    The two partners, the two gods who are luck itself, Indra and Agni, do we call on for partnership.
15. O Indra and Agni, hear the call of the sacrificer who presses (soma).
    Pursue his oblations: come here, drink the somian honey.

VI.61 (502) Sarasvatī

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
14 verses: jagatī 1–3, gāyatrī 4–12, jagatī 13, triṣṭubh 14, organized in tr̥cas

This hymn has a metrical structure similar to the preceding one, VI.60: it is organized in tr̥cas, with the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) in a trimeter meter, the next three tr̥cas in

dimeter (4–12), a return to the original meter in verse 13, and, here, a final verse (14) in yet a different meter. The complexity of the meter corresponds roughly with the density of the thought: the first tṛca is rich in imagery and particularities; the following three tṛcas are less adorned and more generic, though Sarasvatī's riverine nature is clear, especially in the second of these tṛcas, verses 7–9. The hymn ends with a final statement of her superiority (vs. 13) and a plea for her aid and sustenance (vs. 14).

The sheer power of the river and the potential menace of her relentless flow are nicely conveyed, especially in the first tṛca, where she punishes a series of human foes and even destroys the mountains while rewarding her praisers. In parts of the hymn, these rewards are clearly related to her identity as river—the streambeds in verse 3, the milk we pray for in verse 14—but in others the connection is not clear, especially the gift to Vadhryaśva of (apparently) a son Divodāsa, which opens the hymns. The hostile Bṛsaya of verse 3 is also unclear: the name occurs only once elsewhere in the Ṛgveda (I.93.4) in similar context.

1. She gave to the pious Vadhryaśva tempestuous Divodāsa who shakes the debtor,
   she who has wrenched away the provender from one niggard after another. These are your powerful gifts, o Sarasvatī.
2. She, like a root-grubbing (boar) with her snortings, broke the back of the mountains with her powerful waves.
   Sarasvatī, who smashes the foreigners, we would entice here for help with well-plaited (hymns), with visionary thoughts.
3. Sarasvatī, tear down the scorners of the gods, the offspring of every tricky Bṛsaya.
   And (while) you found streambeds for the settlements, you flowed poison for *them*, o you rich in prize mares.

4. Let goddess Sarasvatī, rich in prize mares, with her prizes
   help us—the helper of visionary thoughts.
5. Whoever makes appeal to you, goddess Sarasvatī, when the stake is set,
   as if to Indra at the overcoming of Vṛtra,
6. Aid (him), goddess Sarasvatī, at the prize (contests), you prizewinner.
   Channel gain to us, like Pūṣan.

7. And this Sarasvatī, having a golden course, fearsome,
   obstacle-smashing, wants our good praise—
8. Whose boundless, unswerving, turbulent, roving flood,
   her onslaught, proceeds ever roaring.
9. Beyond all hatreds, beyond her other sisters [=rivers] has the truthful one
   extended us, like the sun the days.

10. And she, dear(est) among the dear (rivers), having seven sisters, very delightful—
    Sarasvatī is (ever) worthy of our praise.

11. Having filled the earthly (places), the broad realm, the midspace,
 let Sarasvatī protect (us) from scorn.
12. Having three seats and seven parts, strengthening the five peoples,
 at every prize contest she is worthy to be invoked.

13. The one who by her greatness shines ever more brightly among the great (rivers), (beyond) the others by her brilliance, the busiest of the busy,
 like a chariot lofty and fashioned for wide ranging, she is to be praised by (every) observant one—Sarasvatī.
14. O Sarasvatī, lead us to a better state. Do not spring away with your milk; do not come up short for us.
 Take delight in our partnerships and communities. Let us not go from you to alien dwelling places.

VI.62 (503) Aśvins

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The first five verses of this hymn cover the familiar ground of Aśvin hymns—the poet's eager invitation to the two gods to drive to our sacrifice. Though the theme and sentiments are familiar, there are a number of nice touches—the enjambment across verse boundaries (1/2a; 2bcd/3a, at least in our opinion) and the play on the concepts of newer and older in verses 4–5. This section ends (5d) with the phrase, modifying the Aśvins, "providing bright gifts to the singer" (*gr̥ṇaté citrárātī*).

The following two verses (6–7) touch on several of the Aśvins' famous deeds, especially the rescue of Bhujyu from the sea (vs. 6), but the two verses after that (8–9) take a detour, addressing other gods and urging them to take violent action against various enemies. The poet seems so agitated that he loses his grip on grammar: verse 9, concerning Mitra and Varuṇa, is syntactically fragmented, shifting without warning or grammatical agreement between dual and singular and between 3rd and 2nd person. (We have not been able to render the full effect in English.)

Though verse 10 returns us to the Aśvins' journey and to a more tranquil grammatical level, it too enlists the Aśvins to attack and also suggests that their journey to us was prompted by the failure of other men. The final verse gives no hint of the agitation in the immediately preceding verses and ends with the same phrase as verse 5, thus implicitly indicating the bipartite structure of the hymn.

1. I shall praise the two outstanding men of this heaven; I call upon the Aśvins, singing [/awakening] with my chants—
 they who, at the breaking of the ruddy dawn, in a single day seek to encompass the ends of the earth and its broad expanses,

2. While striding to the sacrifice with their gleaming (horses). (The horses) have shone the radiant beam of their chariot through the dusky spaces.
   Measuring the many immeasurable expanses, you two drive over the waters, wastelands, and fields,
3. When (you drive) this circuit without slackening, o powerful ones. Over and over you have conveyed insights that are right to the point, with your horses
   swift as thought and vigorous, in order to circumscribe the wayward course of the pious mortal.
4. The two attend upon the thoughts of (me), the newer singer, having harnessed their team,
   conveying beauty and fortifying power, refreshment and nourishment. The age-old Hotar without deceit shall offer sacrifice to the two youths.
5. The two, obliging and skillful, best endowed with many abilities—those age-old ones do I seek to attract here with my newer speech—
   those two who become most wealful for the reciter and praiser, providing bright gifts to the singer.
6. You two with your birds conveyed Bhujyu, the son of Tugra, from the waters, from the sea, through the airy realms,
   through dustless treks, bending (him) away from the lap of the flood with your winged ones.
7. With your victorious (chariot), you charioteers drove through the rock; you harkened to the call of Vadhrīmatī, o bulls.
   Showing favor to Śayu, you made his cow swell. Thus (did you show) your benevolence, you stirring and bustling ones.
8. O world-halves, the anger of gods and among mortals that exists from of old on earth,
   direct that evil heat at the yokemate of demons, o Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas.
9. Which (one of) the two kings, Mitra or Varuṇa, will keep watch over the airy realm, regulating it according to the proper sequence—
   hurl your missile at the deep-embedded demonic power and also at the deceitful speech of the Anu people.
10. With your wheels drawing nearer, with your heaven-bright chariot with its superior men, do you two drive your circuit for our lineage (to prosper),
    because of the distant dereliction of a(nother) mortal. Chop off the heads of the rapacious ones.
11. Drive here with your highest and midmost teams, this way with your lowest.
    Open the doors of the cattle pen, even though they are shut fast, you who provide bright gifts for the singer.

VI.63 (504) Aśvins

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except ekapadā 11

The first four verses of this hymn are divided more or less equally between the invitation to and journey of the Aśvins to our sacrifice (vss. 1–2) and the sacrifice itself (vss. 3–4). The next two verses (5–6) enter mythological territory: the journey of Sūryā, daughter of the Sun, on the Aśvins' chariot along with them. This mythological journey returns us to the actual journey of today (vs. 7) and the hopes we have of these gods when they attend our sacrifice (vs. 8). The final two verses (9–10) are a dānastuti, naming a number of the patrons of the poet, Bharadvāja, with the single pāda of verse 11 expressing his hope for the Aśvins' favor to both himself and his patrons at the place of sacrifice.

1. Where today did our reverential praise song, like a messenger, find these two obliging ones, called upon by many—
   (the praise song) that has (previously) turned the Nāsatyas this way? For you two will be the dearest in his [=poet's] thought.
2. Come fit for this summons of mine, so that, being hymned, you will drink the stalk.
   You drive, away from harm, around this circuit, which neither a distant one nor one close by may traverse.
3. It has been made for you from the stalk; on the expanse [=ritual ground] has been strewn the ritual grass, offering the easiest approach.
   With hands outstretched, seeking you, I have greeted (you). Approaching you, the stones have anointed you.
4. The fire has stood upright for you at the ceremonies. The gift goes forth, glowing, covered in ghee;
   forth the chosen Hotar whose thought is welcomed, who has yoked the Nāsatyas at his call.
5. For splendor the Daughter of the Sun mounted your chariot provided with hundredfold help, o you who offer much enjoyment.
   You became foremost then in the lineage of those worthy of the sacrifice by your magic powers, o magicians, superior men, dancers.
6. Along with these splendors lovely to see you conveyed the flourishing of Sūryā, for beauty.
   The birds flew forth after you, for wonder; (their) choir reached you (so you became) well-praised, o holy ones.
7. Let the birds, the horses that convey best, convey you to the pleasurable offering, o Nāsatyas.
   Your chariot swift as thought has been sent surging forth after the many refreshments and the fortifying powers that bring refreshment.

8. Because your giving is much, o you who give much enjoyment, swell our cow and our refreshment (so that they) don't dry up.
   To you belong praises and the good praise-hymn and the juices that have followed your gift, o honeyed ones.
9. And mine are two silver, swift (mares) of Puraya, a hundred (cows) at (the hands of) Sumīḷha, and cooked (foods) at (the hands of) Peruka.
   Śāṇḍa has given gold-bedecked (horses) along with their allotted (gear). Ten mated cows are attendant upon the high (horses).
10. Purupanthā has given altogether hundreds and thousands of horses for (my) song for you;
   to Bharadvāja he has given (them) for the song, o hero(es). Demonic powers should be smashed, o you of many wondrous powers.
11. Might I, along with my patrons, be in your favor on the expanse [=ritual ground].

VI.64 (505) Dawn

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with reference to multiple Dawns, but soon (by the second half of vs. 1) focuses only on a single Dawn. As so often, the hymn refers to the present and immediate past when Dawn has just dawned. The standard tropes are present: her wide radiance (vss. 2, 3), her ease of travel (vss. 1, 4), her feminine beauty (vs. 2), her accompanying bovines (vss. 3, 5), and especially her connection with the priestly gift distributed at the early-morning sacrifice and with wealth in general (vss. 1, 4, 5, 6). Although the hymn does not stand out for elaborate rhetorical tricks, it is characterized by pleasing imagery; see especially Dawn as archer and chariot-driver in verse 3 and the morning activities of birds and men in verse 6 (a verse found also at I.124.12).

1. The shining Dawns have arisen for splendor, glistening like the waves of the waters.
   She makes all pathways, all passages easy to travel. She has appeared— the good priestly gift, the bounteous one.
2. Auspicious, you have become visible; you radiate widely. Your flare, your radiant beams have flown up to heaven.
   You reveal your breast as you go in beauty, goddess Dawn, shining with all your might.
3. The ruddy, glistening cows convey her of good portion as she spreads widely.
   Like a champion archer his rivals, she drives away darkness; she repels it like a quick (chariot-)driver.

4. Easy are your pathways, easy your passages (even) in the mountains.
   (Even) when it is windless you cross over the waters, self-radiant one.
   Convey wealth here for us to prosper, high Daughter of Heaven with
   your broad course.
5. Convey (it)—you who as the unsurpassable one with your oxen convey
   the boon at your pleasure, Dawn,
   you who are a goddess, o Daughter of Heaven. Become worthy to be
   seen with your munificence at the early invocation!
6. The birds have also flown up from their dwelling, and the men who
   partake of food, at your first flush.
   To the one who is at home you convey much of value, o goddess Dawn,
   and to the pious mortal.

VI.65 (506) Dawn

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

In virtual mirror-image to the previous hymn, this one begins with a single Dawn, but turns for some verses (2–4) to the plural Dawns, before returning to a single Dawn in the final two verses (5–6). The structure of this hymn is more cunning than the somewhat bland VI.64, however. The poet uses identical pāda openings (4a, 4b, 4c, 5a: *idā́ [hí]* "[for] right now…"), with insistence on the here-and-now, to modulate from the present situation and current poet to the mythological model for the dawn and the associated distribution of treasures, namely the Aṅgirases opening the Vala cave (vs. 5), which is presented as if it were happening now. As often when this myth is mentioned as a model for the singer (see, e.g., V.45), there is no mention of Indra, to whom the leadership in this deed is usually attributed. By the end of verse 5 the mythical and successful Aṅgirases have merged with the current poets, and the invocation of both is proclaimed as having come true. The connection between past and present is continued in the pleas for wealth and fame made in the last verse (6).

1. This very one, the daughter born of heaven dawning for us, has
   awakened the human settlements,
   she who with her glistening radiance amid the nights has been recognized
   even across the nocturnal shades of darkness.
2. They have driven through it with their ruddy-yoked horses; brightly shine
   the Dawns with their gleaming chariots.
   Leading the vanguard of the lofty sacrifice, they thrust aside the
   darkness of the night.
3. Bringing down to the pious mortal fame, reward, refreshment,
   nourishment, o Dawns,

as bounteous masters of (wealth) in heroes, establish aid and a treasure
for the one who does honor today.

4. For right now there exists a treasure for the one who does you honor,
right now for the hero, for the pious one, o Dawns,
right now for the poet, when he sings his hymns. Even before you used to
carry (it) down to one such as me.
5. For right now the Aṅgirases are hymning the cowpens of the cows for
you, o Dawn, you who own the high backs of the mountains.
They have split (them) apart with their chant and sacred formulation.
The men's invocation of the gods has come true.
6. Dawn for us, Daughter of Heaven, as of old, for the one who does (you)
honor like Bharadvāja, o bounteous one.
Grant wealth in good heroes to the singer. Confer wide-ranging fame
upon us.

VI.66 (507) Maruts

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The only hymn to the Maruts in Maṇḍala VI, this poem is complex, playful, allusive, and very difficult in parts.

It begins with five dense and syntactically contorted verses about the birth of the Maruts, a topic that regularly invites such treatment. The story of the birth is introduced by a signal that it is esoteric knowledge; verse 1a announces it as a marvel even for someone who really perceives properly. The rest of the verse is both a paradox and a riddle: two entities have the same name, "milker," but one of them constantly gives milk, and the other has done so only once. The riddle is solved by the last word of the verse, "udder"; the paradox juxtaposes the normal udder of a cow, which constantly swells with milk, with the udder of the Marut's mother, Pṛśni, who bore them, that is, milked them out, all at once. (This same phenomenon is referred to in riddling terms in VI.48.22.) Verse 2 continues this theme, and the other parent of the Maruts, their father Rudra, is introduced in verse 3. But both 1 and 3 also allude to the androgynous behavior of the mother Pṛśni, who elsewhere (see esp. IV.3.10) is identified as a bull who gives milk that is identical with semen; in verse 3 here she is the subject of the quintessentially male verb of impregnation (*gárbhaṃ* √*dhā* "implant an embryo"). Verse 4 is the most opaque verse in this sequence. It clearly describes the moment of the Maruts' birth; they did not resist being born, but in fact were milked out when they wished, after having "purified their flaws" while still within her womb. A two-word expression early in the verse (*áyā nú*) seems to have a double meaning: on the one hand, it is the poet's comment about the manner of birth: "now (it happened) *in this way*"; on the

other, it can be read as the direct speech of the Maruts (considered as a group), "Now I will go" (that is, be born), an indication of their moment of choice. The final verse of the birth story relates the fact that Pṛśni, having given them as milk, did not give them milk after they were born, but they were undeterred. There is much that is doubtful in our translation of these verses, but the main outlines seem clear, while the tricks of the poet are much on display.

Though more of his tricks appear in the rest of the hymn, none of it is as difficult as these first five verses. Verse 6 turns on a pun between the word for the "two world-halves" (*ródasī*) and the female who is often found as the Maruts' lover, Rodasī́ (distinguished from the first only by accent). The marvel of their journey through the midspace is described in verse 7, and the good fortune of the man who receives their aid in verse 8. The journey of verse 7 must be to carry them to our sacrifice, for the remaining verses bring the hymn to a fairly conventional end: in verse 9 we produce a hymn for the Maruts; in verse 10 they are compared to the ritual fire, an appropriate simile if they are situated on the ritual ground; in the final verse (10) the aim of attracting them to the sacrifice is made explicit and the competing hymns of rival sacrificers are alluded to.

Unlike many Marut hymns, this one lacks any significant description of their thunderstorm-like aspects.

1. Let this be a marvel even for one who (truly) perceives—(though) owning the same name "milker,"
   while the one stays swollen to give milk to mortals, only once did Pṛśni milk the gleaming (milk/semen) from (the other) udder.
2. Those who kept blazing up like fires being kindled, when the Maruts were strengthened two or three times over—
   dustless, golden were their (chariots)—they came into being all at once with their manly and male powers.
3. Those who are the sons of Rudra the rewarder, and whom she was stalwart (enough) to bear—
   for she is known as the great mother of the great—just she, Pṛśni, implanted the embryo for good offspring.
4. Those who do not retreat from their birth: now (it happened) in *this* way [/(saying) "Now I will go"]—purifying their flaws while still within (their mother),
   they were milked forth gleaming, at their pleasure, growing in splendor all along their bodies.
5. Those for whom even right away [=right after their birth] the irrepressible one [=Pṛśni] was not there to give milk—those who, assuming the bold name "Marut,"
   did not (stand still) like posts, (but were themselves) irrepressible in their greatness. Even now [/never] would the one of good drops [=Pṛśni] appease (those) mighty ones.

6. Just these mighty ones in a bold host yoked both well-fixed world-halves [=*ródasī*] through their vast power.
   Then Rodasī mounted among these impetuous ones like a self-blazing light.
7. Let your course be without antelopes, o Maruts, also without horses— the course that one who is no charioteer drives.
   Without halt, without reins as it crosses the dusky realm, it travels through the two world-halves along its paths, heading toward its goal.
8. There exists now no one to obstruct, no one to overcome him whom you aid in the winning of prizes, o Maruts,
   whom (you aid in the winning) of progeny, of cows, of descendants, of waters. He is the splitter of the (cow)pen just then at the decisive end of the day.
9. Bring forward a brilliant chant for the singing, swift, self-strong Marut(-troop).
   Those who overpower powers with power, before (those) combatants the earth trembles, o Agni.
10. Flaring like the dart of the ceremony [=ritual fire], stirring thirstily like tongues of fire,
    chanting like boisterous heroes, the Maruts with their flashing birth are unassailable.
11. This Marut(-troop) grown strong, with flashing spears, the son(s) of Rudra I seek to entice here with an invocation.
    For (the favor of) the troop of heaven the gleaming inspired thoughts, mighty like mountains or waters, have contended (with each other).

VI.67 (508) Mitra and Varuṇa

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This is the only hymn dedicated to Mitra and Varuṇa in Maṇḍala VI, though Indra and Varuṇa are the recipients of the next, unremarkable hymn. By contrast, this hymn is obscure in reference and meaning, and full of rare words, unclear morphological forms, contorted phraseology, puzzling imagery, and ellipses difficult to fill. Our interpretation of the hymn both in detail and in general outline differs from the many incompatible interpretations offered by other scholars (differences that we cannot discuss here), but our interpretation does produce a clear structure within which the many puzzles can be evaluated.

The hymn begins straightforwardly enough, with an exhortation to the priests to offer ritual praise to Mitra and Varuṇa (vs. 1) and an invitation to the two gods

to come to our ritual sacrifice (vss. 2, 3ab). This first section ends (3cd), in our view, with an elaborated version of 1ab, declaring the gods' power to control even the rich and powerful.

The ritual context returns later in the hymn (vss. 7–8), and the two ritually oriented portions frame a section relating to the birth of Mitra and Varuṇa from Aditi (vs. 4) and the powers they assumed to regulate the cosmos (vss. 5–6). The allusion to their birth recalls the lengthy birth narrative of the Maruts in the immediately preceding hymn (VI.66.1–5). With the return to the ritual situation, the two gods are first exhorted to drink the soma, whose preparation is described in enigmatic terms (vs. 7). In verse 8, again in our view, the two gods receive a summons from Agni (not named), the ritual fire through whom they will consume ghee, because he finds they are not there. (See the calls in the structurally matching vss. 2–3.)

This absence leads to the final section of the hymn (vss. 9–11), which appears to treat the rivalry among competing sacrificers. If Mitra and Varuṇa are not at our sacrifice (vs. 8b), they must be elsewhere. The poet describes these competitors in extremely negative terms (vs. 9) as violating the ordinances that are the most prominent feature of Mitra and Varuṇa's moral command. In contrast, verse 10 presents the proper ritual behavior and attitudes of our side, ending with yet another affirmation of the gods' power to control and set in place the people (10d, reminiscent of 1cd and 3cd). And in the final verse (11) we are ourselves properly placed in the shelter of Mitra and Varuṇa (a placement first requested in vs. 2), hoping for generous gifts when the soma sacrifice is performed. The last half-verse refers, in our view, to this sacrifice: the cows are the milk mixture pursuing the straight-flying soma; the bold bull in battle-lust is also the soma. But the expressions also evoke martial images appropriate to the rivalry among sacrificers found in the preceding two verses. It is worth noting that the preceding hymn also made brief allusion to sacrificial rivalry in its final verse (VI.66.11).

1. Of all beings the most preeminent, Mitra and Varuṇa are to be
 continuously strengthened by your songs.
 The best controllers, the two without equal, who, like reins, firmly
 control the peoples with their own arms.
2. This inspired thought from me is spread forth for you two, (calling you)
 two dear ones with homage to the ritual grass.
 Hold forth to us, Mitra and Varuṇa, the unbesiegable shelter of yours
 that provides defense, o you of good drops.
3. Drive hither, Mitra and Varuṇa, dear ones being called to (the ritual
 grass) with good recitation, with homage.
 You two who like industrious workers firmly (control) (even) the peoples
 ensconced in prosperity, you set in their place even those (who
 themselves say) "listen!" [=bosses], with your greatness.

4. When at her season Aditi (was ready) to bear as embryo (the two) who like prizewinning horses were of pure breed,
   who were being born forth greatly great, she pushed downward (at delivery) the two to be terrible for the cheating mortal.
5. Since all the gods in concert, being exhilarated, magnanimously established dominion for you two,
   such that you two surround even the two wide world-halves, there exist spies (in your service), undeceivable, ungullible.
6. Because you uphold your dominion through the days and you make firm (heaven's) back as if from highest heaven,
   firm (also) is the heavenly body [=sun], and belonging to all the gods it has stretched to earth and to heaven with the gushing [=rain] of those two [=Mitra and Varuṇa].
7. You should appropriate the lively (soma) to fill your belly, when those of the same pedigree [=soma-pressing fingers?] fill the seat.
   The unsurpassable maidens [=fingers] are not neglectful when they distribute their milk [=soma], o you two who enliven all.
8. (You) two (does) the one of good wisdom [=Agni] always (call) here with his tongue, when the true wheel (of the sacrifice) [=Agni] has come to be without you.
   Let this be your greatness, you who have ghee for food: you open up the narrow place for the pious one.
9. When they start contending over you two but violate the dear ordinances ordained by you, Mitra and Varuṇa,
   they, not attending upon the sacrifice, are neither gods, despite their vaunting, nor mortals, but like children who do not swell [=grow/thrive].
10. When the praisers distribute their speech and some recite the formal invocations, paying them heed,
    after that we will speak to you pronouncements that come true: "No one (will violate your ordinances). You set in their places (the peoples) along with the gods by your greatness."
11. In just this way, in the charge of you two and of your shelter, (we seek) of you, Mitra and Varuṇa, (giving) that is not stunted,
    when the cows [=milk mixture] will bound after the straight-flying one [=soma], when they will yoke the bold bull [=soma] in battle-lust.

VI.68 (509) Indra and Varuṇa

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 9–10

The theme of ritual reciprocity dominates here, with praise of the two dedicands fairly spare, whether individual or joint. The message is simple: the piously

performed sacrifice that we offer to the two gods should be generously rewarded with wealth.

The sacrifice is announced in the first verse, as an enticement to bring the two gods here. The praise, such as it is, comes in the next three verses, a series of superlatives characterizing them both in verse 2, a contrastive glance at their respective functions in the second half of verse 3, and an assertion that the two are preeminent even among the other gods in verse 4. (Verse 4 is also noteworthy for the gendered description of the gods; female deities are not usually given recognition when the gods in general are mentioned.)

Wealth is the target of the middle verses (5–8), wealth for priests and patrons alike. The word *rayí* "wealth" is prominent in all four verses.

The final verses (9–11) depict the here-and-now of the sacrifice, happening in real time, as it were, signaled by an occurrence of a form of the annunciatory near-deictic pronoun ("here is/this here") in each verse (*ayám* 9c, *imám* 10a, *idám* 11c). The gods are present at our sacrifice and urged to drink the soma formally announced to them.

1. The sacrifice has been raised up in concert with obedience, for the man who has twisted the ritual grass to perform sacrifice to you two, as Manu (did)—
   (the sacrifice) that will turn Indra and Varuṇa here today for great refreshment and for great favor.
2. For you two are the most glorious among the gods with your thrusting, and you two are the mightiest of mighty warriors,
   the most bountiful of bountiful benefactors, powerfully forceful, fully armed, overcoming obstacles by truth.
3. By reason of their favors, sing to Indra and Varuṇa, who take delight, with forceful, reverential (songs).
   The one smites Vr̥tra with his might and mace; the other as inspired poet attends upon the (ritual) enclosures.
4. When all the gods, both ladies and men, grow strong, (their praises) sung for their own sake by (our) men,
   you stand out from them by your greatness, o Indra and Varuṇa, (and also you two) wide ones, o Heaven and Earth.
5. Just he acquires good gifts and good help and possesses the truth who ritually serves you, o Indra and Varuṇa, in his own person.
   With refreshment he, possessing gifts, could overcome hostilities; he will gain wealth and wealthy peoples.
6. The wealth that you two provide to the man who performs pious ceremonies—wealth consisting of goods and much livestock—
   may that abide in us, o Indra and Varuṇa—(the wealth) that shatters the taunts of the rapacious ones.
7. And, o Indra and Varuṇa, for our patrons may there be wealth offering good protection, with gods as its herdsmen—

(our patrons) whose impetuous force, victorious in battles, surpassingly extends their éclat all at once.

8. Now, Indra and Varuṇa, as you are being sung, replenish our wealth for the excellence of our fame, o gods.
   In just this way singing the force of the great one, might we cross over difficulties, as if over waters by boat.
9. Now chant forth at length your own dear thought to the lofty sovereign king, to the god Varuṇa.
   Here is the one of great commandments who radiates through the two wide (worlds) with his greatness and by his resolve, like unaging (fire) with its flame.
10. O Indra and Varuṇa, soma-drinkers—drink this exhilarating pressed soma here, o you of steadfast commandments.
    Your chariot drives to the ceremony for attracting the gods, (as if) to good pasture to drink.
11. O Indra and Varuṇa, you bulls—drench yourselves in the most honeyed, bullish soma.
    This stalk has been poured all around for you here among us. Having sat down on this ritual grass, bring yourselves to exhilaration.

VI.69 (510) Indra and Viṣṇu

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The focus of most of this hymn is entirely ritual, with the two divine recipients of the hymn treated as a unit. The gods are repeatedly urged to come together to the sacrifice, to enjoy the various forms of praise, and to drink the soma—as well as to give us wealth in return. Only one verse (4) is devoted to the gods' deeds, with the "wide striding" that is Viṣṇu's best-known exploit attributed to both of them. Their unity is reinforced by the grammar. Every verse in this hymn contains a vocative address to the two gods, always in a dvandva compound, except for the final verse (8).

In that verse, the two gods are grammatically separated though still addressed in the vocative, and this grammatical change marks a sharp change in conception as well. Though it is emphasized in the first half of the verse that both have conquered and not been conquered, in the second half it is said that they contended *with each other*, but in the end divided the stake of a thousand (cows?) in thirds, with each taking a part. As Geldner points out, this dispute between Indra and Viṣṇu is referred to a number of times in early Vedic prose and later, and according to the Taittirīya Saṃhitā (VII.1.5.5) Indra received two thirds of the stake, Viṣṇu one third. The hymn thus springs a surprise at its end, by this glancing allusion to

strife between the two gods who were depicted throughout the rest of the hymn as an indissoluble pair.

The language and style of most of the hymn are unremarkable and somewhat repetitive. Noteworthy are verses 2 and 3, with parallel structures in their second halves, deploying parallel puns on day (the sun's rays) and night, homonymous with words referring to verbal productions at the sacrifice.

1. With ritual action and with refreshment I propel both of you together, o Indra and Viṣṇu, to the far shore of this labor.
   Enjoy the sacrifice and confer wealth, causing us to cross on paths free of harm.
2. O Indra and Viṣṇu, who are the begetters of all thoughts, the two tubs holding soma—
   let the hymns as they are being recited help you forward, forward the praises as they are being sung in the form of chants [/along with the rays (of the sun)].
3. O Indra and Viṣṇu, exhilaration-lords of the exhilarating drinks, drive here to the soma, while conferring wealth.
   Let the praises as they are being recited in solemn words anoint both of you together with the ointments of thoughts [/through the nights].
4. Let your horses, vanquishing hostility, sharers in exhilaration, convey you two here, o Indra and Viṣṇu.
   Enjoy all the invocations of our thoughts. Harken to my sacred formulations, my hymns.
5. O Indra and Viṣṇu, this (deed) of yours is worthy of admiration: in the exhilaration of soma you two strode widely;
   you made the midspace wider; you spread out the realms for us to live.
6. O Indra and Viṣṇu, you who eat first, you on whom the oblation is bestowed with reverence—having grown strong through the oblation,
   confer wealth on us, o you whose drink is ghee. You two are the sea, the tub holding soma.
7. O Indra and Viṣṇu, drink of this honey, of the soma, o wondrous ones. Fill your belly.
   The exhilarating stalks have come to you. Harken to my sacred formulations, my call.
8. You both have conquered; you are not conquered. Neither one of these two has been conquered.
   O Viṣṇu and you Indra, when you two were contending, you broke apart the thousand in three parts.

VI.70 (511) Heaven and Earth

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: jagatī

This celebration of Heaven and Earth associates them with all sorts of beneficial liquids. The first word in the hymn is "ghee," and in the rest of that verse we find milk, honey, and semen, all of which recur in the hymn: note especially the parallel verses 4 and 5 devoted to ghee and honey respectively. Besides these liquid endowments, the physical qualities of the two divinities are barely mentioned; it is instead their status as objects of worship and praise at the sacrifice and their ability to grant rewards to us that preoccupy the poet.

1. The two rich in ghee, excelling in glory over the creatures, wide and broad, milking out honey, well-ornamented—
   Heaven and Earth were propped apart according to the foundation of Varuṇa, the two unaging ones possessing abundant semen.
2. Never drying up, with abundant streams, rich in milk, they milk out ghee for the good performer (of rituals), the two of pure commandments.
   Ruling over this creation, you two World-Halves, for us pour the semen, as was established by Manu.
3. The mortal who, to stride straight, ritually serves you two—you World-Halves, you two Holy Places—that one reaches his goal.
   He is propagated through his progeny forth from your foundation. Those (creatures) that are poured out from you, (though) of diverse forms, have the same commandments.
4. Heaven and Earth, covered over with ghee, glorious with ghee, mixing with ghee, strong through ghee,
   wide and broad, set in front at the choosing of the Hotar—just these two do the inspired poets reverently invoke, to seek their favor.
5. Let Heaven and Earth trickle honey on us, the two dripping with honey, milking out honey, having honeyed commandments,
   through their divinity establishing sacrifice for themselves, and material wealth, great fame, the prize of victory, and an abundance of heroes for us.
6. Nourishment let both Heaven and Earth swell for us—father and mother, all-knowing, of wondrous power.
   Jointly bestowing, let the two World-Halves, beneficial for all, jointly impel gain, the prize of victory, and wealth to us.

VI.71 (512) Savitar

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
6 verses: jagatī 1–3, triṣṭubh 4–6

The two halves of this hymn (vss. 1–3, 4–6) are distinguished by meter, and in fact they appear to have been originally two hymns, which pattern together in vocabulary and themes. Geldner suggests that the first is a morning hymn, the second an evening hymn.

The parallelism is especially clear at the beginning: the first verses of each (1, 4) begin identically: "Up this god Savitar…" (*úd u ṣyá deváḥ savitā́*…) and follow with a mention of his golden arms/hands. The second verses (2, 5) are each appropriate for the time of day they represent: in the morning hymn (vs. 2) Savitar impels the creatures forth to their daily activities, while in the evening hymn (vs. 5) he brings them to rest. The third verses (3, 6) make the expected pleas for help and benefit from the god.

1. Up has this god Savitar raised his two golden arms for impelling, the very resolute one.
   He sprinkles his hands with ghee, the young battler of good skill, in his spreading apart of the dusky realm.
2. May we be (there) at the best impulsion of the god Savitar and for his giving of goods—
   you [=Savitar] who are (busy) at bringing to rest and at impelling forth the whole two-footed and four-footed creation.
3. With your kindly, undeceivable protectors, o Savitar, today protect our household all around.
   You of golden tongue, guard us for our ever newer welfare; let none who curse hold sway over us.

4. Up has this god Savitar stood—the golden-handed friend of the house—facing evening [=toward the west].
   Copper-jawed, deserving the sacrifice, possessing a gladdening tongue, he impels here to the pious man much of value.
5. And up has Savitar raised his golden arms with their lovely fronts like the Upavaktar priest.
   He has mounted the heights of heaven, of earth; he has brought to rest whatever is flying, even the formless [=wind].
6. A thing of value today, o Savitar, and one of value tomorrow—day after day impel to us a thing of value,
   for, o god, *you have control over much of value. Through this poetic insight may we be partakers of the valuables.

VI.72 (513) Indra and Soma

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Each verse in this brief hymn begins with a vocative addressing the two recipients of the hymn, joined in a dual dvandva compound. Each of the verses recounts one or more of Indra's cosmogonic deeds or his beneficial acts for mankind, here ascribed equally to both gods. Since Indra needs to drink soma in order to accomplish his feats, this sharing of credit is not surprising. Some of the acts are expressed in the past tense, some in the present, even those that belong to the mythical past like the smashing of the serpent (vs. 3). The language is straightforward, even in the expression of the familiar paradox in verse 4 of the cooked milk found in the raw cows.

1. Indra and Soma, great is this greatness of you two. You did the first great things:
   you found the sun; you found the sunlight; you smashed away all the shades of darkness—and the scorners.
2. Indra and Soma, you make the dawn shine; you lead the sun upward with its light.
   You propped up the heaven with a prop; you spread out Mother Earth.
3. Indra and Soma, you smash the serpent surrounding the waters—Vṛtra. Heaven gave consent to you.
   You roused forth the floods of the rivers; you filled the many (floods) of the sea.
4. Indra and Soma, you deposited the cooked (milk) within the raw (cows), just in the udders of the cows.
   You held the gleaming (milk), (though) it was not tied on, within the dappled, moving (cows).
5. Indra and Soma, it is you, certainly, who bestowed surpassing (wealth), bringing descendants in its train, worthy of fame.
   You made unbridled force, manly and victorious in battle, as cloak for the settled domains, you strong ones.

VI.73 (514) Bṛhaspati

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

In this brief hymn Bṛhaspati is credited with many of Indra's exploits and is described with Indraic vocabulary. It is only in the very last word of the hymn "with his chants" (*arkaíḥ*) that the particular character of Bṛhaspati and his particular role in the opening of the Vala cave, that of singer and formulator, are referred to.

1. He who is splitter of the stone, first born, possessed of truth—Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, possessing the oblation—
   (*filling) the doubly exalted earth, sitting in front of the heated pot, our father the bull keeps bellowing to the two world-halves.
2. Bṛhaspati, who even for such a man (as me) has made wide space at the invocation to the gods,
   smashing obstacles, he keeps splitting apart the strongholds, conquering rivals, overcoming enemies in battles.
3. Bṛhaspati entirely conquered goods; this god conquered the great enclosures full of cattle.
   When he sets out to win the waters and the sun, Bṛhaspati is unopposable. He smites the foe with his chants.

VI.74 (515) Soma and Rudra

Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
4 verses: triṣṭubh

Although there is another Ṛgvedic hymn dedicated to Rudra and Soma (I.43), in that hymn they are invoked and described in separate verses; this hymn is the only place in which the two gods are invoked jointly, in a dual dvandva compound that appears in every verse and is found only in this hymn. Indeed, the gods have little in common, and the elements in this hymn that are not generic to divinity in general are applicable only to Rudra—in particular, the plea to destroy disease (vs. 2) and give healing remedies (vs. 3). The adjective "very kindly" (*suśévau*) in verse 4 is etymologically related to and anticipates the epithet *śíva* "kindly," which later characterizes Rudra (already ṚV X.92.9) and ultimately replaces his name.

1. O Soma and Rudra, uphold your lordly power; let our desires [/sacrifices] reach you fittingly.
   Depositing seven treasures in every house, be weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
2. O Soma and Rudra, tear out, tear to pieces the disease that has entered our household.
   Drive calamity into the distance far away. For us let there be auspicious things bringing good fame.
3. O Soma and Rudra, place all these healing remedies on us, in our bodies.
   Unhitch, release the outrage committed (by us,) which is bound onto our bodies—(release it) from us.
4. You two with sharp weapons, with sharp missiles, very kindly—o Soma and Rudra, be merciful to us here.
   Release us from the noose of Varuṇa; protect us, showing your benevolence.

VI.75 (516) Weapons

Pāyu Bhāradvāja
19 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6, 10; anuṣṭubh 12–13, 15–16, 19

This supplemental hymn attached to the end of the maṇḍala is one of the most memorable and delightful in the R̥gveda. It praises the weapons of battle and their parts, and it is structured as a list of riddles. Each weapon receives one verse; sometimes the weapon is named at the beginning of the verse (as in vs. 2), but more often it is found only toward the end, preceded by a riddling definition. Particularly striking are the verses in which the subject is described as a seductive woman or tender mother (vss. 3–4), a characterization that contrasts sharply with the violence of battle. (Weapons so described are feminine in grammatical gender.) In the following translation the weapon that is the answer to the riddle is italicized.

The hymn is more or less metrically unified for the first ten verses, and verse 10 reads like a hymn-final verse, breaking the riddle pattern to beg a collection of gods and ancestors for protection. The rest of the hymn alternates trimeter and dimeter meter, and although the riddling verses continue (vss. 11, 13–15), there is also direct address to the weapons themselves and prayers to various gods for protection. The more various character of this second part of the hymn has led some scholars to consider it an even later addition, although this does not seem a necessary conclusion. The final verse (19) calls down destruction on every type of enemy and affirms the primacy of the protective sacred formulation—as "inner armor," thus paired with the outer armor (the same word *várman*) found in the first verse of the hymn. Thus, whether secondarily or not, the hymn has a faint ring structure.

1. His mien is like that of a thundercloud, when he drives armored into the lap of battles.
   With an unpierceable body, conquer! Let the greatness of your *armor* carry you through.
2. With the *bow* may we win cattle, with the bow the contest, with the bow may we win the sharp battles.
   The bow banishes the (battle-)lust of our rival. With the bow may we win all the quarters.
3. Just like (a woman) about to speak, she keeps going up to his ear, while embracing her dear partner.
   Like a maiden (with her anklets?), she jangles when stretched out on the bow: this *bowstring* here that makes (the arrow) cross over into the melee (as if to a [festive] gathering).
4. The two faring forth to the melees, like a maiden to (festive) gatherings—let them carry (the arrow) as a mother does a child in her lap.
   Let them pierce our rivals when the two find each other: these *bow-ends* here when they spring apart (against) the enemies.

5. Father of many (daughters [=arrows]), he (also) has many a son; he makes a clattering when he descends into the melees.
   The *quiver*, tied onto the back, wins clashes and battles—all of them—when it is thrust into action.
6. Standing on the chariot, he leads the prizewinners [=horses] forward wherever he desires: the good charioteer.
   Admire the greatness of the *reins*. The cords guide, following the (charioteer's) mind (though it is) behind them.
7. They make their sharp cries—the bullish-hooved *horses* along with the chariots, as they seek the prize,
   trampling down the enemies with their forefeet, they destroy our rivals, without (even) divesting (them of their armor).
8. The *chariot-stand*, "Oblation(-deposit)" its name, where his weapon, his armor is deposited—
   there may we reverently approach the powerful chariot always when we seek its benevolence.
9. The *forefathers*: assembling for the sweet (soma), conferring vigor, they who are props in distress, skillful, deep,
   with glittering weapons, arrow-strong, not shirking, entirely heroic, broad, overwhelming the troops.
10. O Brahmins, forefathers, deserving of soma, let Heaven and Earth, blameless ones, (be) kindly to us;
    let Pūṣan protect us from difficult passage, you who are strong through truth. Guard (us): let none who curse hold sway over us.

11. She wears the fine-feathered (eagle); a wild deer is her tooth. Lashed together with cows, she flies when propelled forth.
    Where men clash and separate, there will our *arrows* provide shelter for us.
12. You (arrow, though) of straight course, avoid us. Let our body become a rock.
    Let Soma speak on our behalf; let Aditi provide us shelter.
13. It smashes hard on their back, keeps beating at their haunches—
    o *horsewhip*, impel the cautious horses into battles.
14. Like a snake with its coils, it encircles the arm, parrying the blow of the bowstring—
    the *handguard*, knowing all the trajectories (of the bowstring): as a male let it protect the male all around.
15. She who is smeared with poison, with the head of a deer, but whose mouth is metal:
    here is lofty reverence to her who has (received) the semen of Thunder, to the goddess *Arrow*.

16. Once released, fly away, you arrow, sharpened by a sacred formulation.
    Go to the enemies; fall on them. Do not leave a single one of them standing.
17. Where the darts fly together, like lads with unruly hair,
    there let Brahmaṇaspati, let Aditi provide us shelter—always provide shelter.
18. Your vulnerable places I cover with armor; let Soma the king clothe you with immortality.
    Let Varuṇa make (a space) wider than wide for you; let the gods cheer you on as you win.
19. Whoever wishes to smite us—one of our own or a foreigner, or even one outside the pale—
    him let all the gods injure. The sacred formulation is my inner armor.

VII

Maṇḍala VII

Maṇḍala VII is unusual because in this, the longest of the Family Books, almost all the hymns are attributed to just one poet, Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi, Vasiṣṭha the son of Mitra and Varuṇa. According to the Anukramaṇī two hymns were composed either by Vasiṣṭha or by Kumāra Āgneya (101, 102), and two hymns were joint compositions of Vasiṣṭha and his sons (32, 33). In 32, however, it assigns one pāda, or at most one and a half verses, to Śakti Vāsiṣṭha, and the rest of the hymn is by his father. The Anukramaṇī unequivocally attributes all the other one hundred hymns of the maṇḍala to Vasiṣṭha alone.

This attribution of all these hymns to a single poet is historically unlikely. Perhaps many of the poems were composed by Vasiṣṭha, but unlike the other family poets, the Vasiṣṭha poets apparently developed a tradition of crediting their work to their illustrious ancestor. Because of this focus on him, Vasiṣṭha emerges as a distinct literary figure in the maṇḍala. He is mentioned—or mentions himself—twenty-four times in VII, and he appears as a model ritualist also in hymns from later maṇḍalas, for example, X.150.5, X.181.1, both attributed to his descendants, and X.65.15. Not only is he a distinct figure in the Ṛgveda, he also has a distinct literary personality. For the construction of a poetic persona, see Jamison (2007: esp. chap. 1, and the following chapters) for a discussion of Vasiṣṭha.

Maṇḍala VII also has a distinctive distribution of hymns. It includes nine hymns dedicated, either wholly or in part, to the Ādityas or to Mitra and Varuṇa, four hymns to Indra and Varuṇa, and four hymns to Varuṇa alone. The significant role that the Ādityas and particularly Varuṇa play in VII perhaps reflects a family connection to these gods, which also figures in the tradition that Vasiṣṭha was the son of Mitra and Varuṇa. The personality of Vasiṣṭha is defined most strongly in the four hymns to Varuṇa (VII.86–89). They describe an intimate relationship between the poet and the god, in which the poet fears the god's displeasure but hopes for his mercy and his guidance, while recalling their previous friendship.

The maṇḍala also contains the Ṛgveda's longest continuous series of hymns to the Aśvins (67–74) and to Dawn (75–81), although the hymns of neither collection show the originality of the Varuṇa hymns. There are a number of noteworthy individual hymns. Among the most significant is VII.18, depicting the so-called

Battle of the Ten Kings, which may reflect actual events, although with what accuracy it is hard to say. In distinctly triumphalist language, it tells how King Sudās and the Bharatas were victorious over an alliance of ten kings ranged against him. This battle may have been historically important if it marked the dominance of the Bharatas over other Vedic tribes and significant movement toward a political consolidation of the Vedic peoples. Closely connected with VII.18 is VII.33, attributed partly to Vasiṣṭha himself and partly to his sons. The hymn affirms the role of Vasiṣṭha in securing Indra's critical help in Sudās's victory over the ten kings and concludes with his sons' story of the birth of Vasiṣṭha. Another quite remarkable hymn, although in a very different vein, is VII.103, the Frog Hymn, in which the poet compares the action and croaking of frogs to the ritual acts and recitations of priests. The hymn was likely composed for the beginning of the rainy season and with the purpose of spurring the fertility appropriate to the season. Equally unusual and delightful is the sleep charm (VII.55).

The Vasiṣṭha clan refrain, "Do you protect us always with your blessings," occupies the final pāda of most of the triṣṭubh hymns in this maṇḍala.

VII.1 (517) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
25 verses: virāj 1–18, triṣṭubh 19–25

This hymn contains a double ending. The first is at verse 20, which concludes with the signature pāda of the Vasiṣṭhas in 20d and which is marked by a shift to triṣṭubh meter in verses 19–20. The hymn continues in triṣṭubh to verse 25, which repeats verse 20. Oldenberg suggests that there is a deliberate attempt to make this hymn parallel to VII.34, the first of the hymns to All Gods, which also has twenty-five verses. The two parts of the hymn, verses 1–20 and 21–25, are thematically similar since both are concerned with the life and lineage of the householder, although the second part places particular emphasis on Agni as the sacrificial fire and the blessings that he can bring.

The hymn describes the kindling of Agni in the house so that the household fire will guard its prosperity and help it flourish. Agni will be the leader of the household (vs. 3) and the fire of the sacrifice (vs. 16). In particular, the householder desires sons and other males in his extended family, who will bring prosperity to the home and guarantee the householder's continued lineage. These are the *vīrā́ḥ* "men, heroes" (vss. 5, 11, 15, 19, 24), an abundance of whom the poet desires and the lack of whom he fears (19). The poet also mentions the *náraḥ* "men" or "fine men" (vss. 1, 4, 9, 10, 11), who in the first three of these verses are described as ritually serving Agni. That function is typical of *náraḥ*, who elsewhere in the R̥gveda are often priests. Here the *vīrā́ḥ* and *náraḥ* do not appear to be different people, however, since they are described in similar terms. So the *náraḥ* in 4c and the *vīrā́ḥ* in 15c are

both "well born," and the poet asks that the householder never suffer from the lack of either (11a and 19a).

The poet repeats the word *nítya* in reference to Agni as "our own" or "their own" (vss. 2, 12) and to "his own" offerings (vs. 17) and "our own" lineage (vs. 21). He also repeats *svá*, which has a similar sense, with reference to "our own" devotion (vs. 6) and the householder's "own" kin (vs. 12). Through their repetition and meaning, the two words form a nexus between Agni and the householder, which connects the kindling and tending of the fire to the longevity of the householder's family. Likewise in verse 17, as Geldner notes, the circumambulation of the Hotar with the fire around the fire-place is described as the procession of a bride and groom around the fire at a wedding. The imagery of the wedding affirms that Agni is now a member of the family of the householder.

More generally, the poet creates a close connection between Agni and humans by allowing either one to be the subject of verse 23cd and either one to be the object. That is, either the god Agni allows the priest to obtain goods from the gods and the patronage of a sacrificer, or the priest makes it possible for Agni to obtain goods for mortals and to become accessible to the patrons of the sacrifice.

1. Our men gave birth to Agni in the two fire-churning sticks, by their insights and the motion of their hands—to him who is proclaimed,
   to the flaming houselord, visible far away.
2. To give help anywhere, the good (gods) installed in the home Agni, beautiful to look upon,
   the one to be skillfully tended, who was in the house as their own.
3. When you are kindled forth, Agni, shine in front for us with your inexhaustible shaft of light, o youngest one.
   Prizes of victory ever go toward you.
4. Your brilliant fires blaze forth, abounding in good men, better than (others') fires,
   here where our well-born men sit together.
5. Through insight, Agni, give us wealth abounding in good men and, o capable one, a good lineage that is proclaimed
   and that the invading sorcerer does not overcome.
6. The very skillful one toward whom the young, oblation-bearing girl [=the ladle], filled with ghee, goes in the evening and at dawn,
   toward him (goes) our own devotion, seeking goods.
7. Agni, burn away all hostile powers with the heat by which you burned Jarūtha.
   Make sickness disappear without a sound.
8. O best Agni—flaming, shining, pure—he who will kindle your face here—
   also because of these praise songs (of his) you should be here for us.

9. Our ancestral, mortal men, who shared among themselves your face many times, o Agni—
also because of these you should be favorable here to us.
10. Let these men, champions at the smashing of obstacles, prevail over all ungodly wiles—
they who marvel at my insight that is proclaimed.
11. Agni, let us not sit in the absence of men, nor (let us sit) around you without posterity because of a lack of heroes [=sons]
amid (other) houses filled with offspring, o you belonging to the house—
12. (Let Agni approach) our dwelling, which the horseman [=Agni] approaches as his own to sacrifice, (a dwelling) filled with offspring and endowed with a good lineage,
having increased by our own kin's posterity.
13. Protect us, Agni, from the detestable demon. Protect us from the crookedness of the ungenerous and malicious one.
With you as my yokemate, I would prevail over those doing battle (with me).
14. Let this very Agni be superior to other fires, here where there gather a prizewinning horse, a strong-handed lineage,
and the syllable [/the inexhaustible cow] with a thousand cattle-shelters.
15. This very Agni, who protects against the rapacious ones, should free his kindler from constriction.
Well-born men circle around him.
16. Here is that Agni, receiving poured oblations in many places, whom the master kindles, bringing the offering,
and whom the Hotar goes around at the rites.
17. In you, Agni, as masters we would pour many oblations that are your own,
as we make the twin bridal processions at the sacrificial meal.
18. And, Agni, these oblations are most sought: unwearying, convey them to the divine assembly.
Let them [=the gods] seek these, our sweet-scented (oblations).
19. Agni, do not hand us over to a lack of men. To neglect with its shabby dress—do not hand us over to this.
Do not (hand) us (over) to hunger nor to the demon, o you who possess the truth. Do not be angry at us in our house or in the forest.
20. Now direct my formulations upward, Agni. O god, you will sweeten them for our generous (patrons).
We on both sides [=priests and patrons] would be in your generosity.
– Do you protect us always with your blessings.
21. O Agni, you are of easy summons and joy-bringing appearance. Be brilliant with good brilliance, o son of strength.

In company with you, let there be no falling short for our own lineage.
Let not the manly hero fade away among us.

22. Do not declare that we maintain them badly, Agni, since these fires are kindled by the gods.
Let not bad thoughts from you, a god, reach us, not even because of our confusion, o son of strength.
23. That mortal is rich, o Agni of beautiful face, who pours the oblation in the immortal one.
He [=Agni or the mortal] establishes him [=the mortal or Agni] as one who gains goods among the gods, the one to whom the inquiring patron goes, seeking his ends.
24. Since you know of the great, easy passage, Agni, convey here to our patrons lofty wealth,
by which, o powerful one, we would rejoice as those undiminished in lifetime and having abundant good heroes.
25. Now direct my formulations upward, Agni. O god, you will sweeten them for our generous (patrons).
We on both sides would be in your generosity. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.2 (518) Āprī

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: triṣṭubh

This Āprī hymn offers several original images and turns of phrase, even as it follows the prescribed sequence of invocations. In verse 2cd the gods who sweeten the offerings are probably the assembly of the deities and divine objects who are invoked in the hymn. Two similes complicate the second half of verse 5. The priests open the doors so that the chariot, probably the sacrifice itself, can pass into the realm of the gods. In 5cd with their oblations of ghee the priests anoint the many doors that lead to the gods. In pāda c the doors are compared to cows licking a calf. We have suggested that the "divine chariot," the sacrifice, corresponds to the calf and that the ghee-offerings at the Prayājas, the "fore-offerings," are the "licks." It is not entirely clear why the doors are compared to unmarried girls in pāda d. The ritual situation to which the verse refers, however, is explained by I.124.8, which describes anointed brides-to-be who about to choose a husband (*vrā́*) at the assemblies (*sámana*) that include prospective grooms. The two similes are united by the representation of the *dúraḥ*, which are grammatically feminine, as females: mothers and brides. And finally, rather unusually, verse 7 identifies the two divine Hotars, who are not actually named, each as Agni Jātavedas. The phrasing suggests that this verse may be a reversal of V.9.1–2. In V.9.1c the poet says *mánye tvā jātávedasam* "I think you

[=Agni] to be Jātavedas," and then in 2a, he calls Agni a Hotar. Alternatively, the form *jātávedasā* could be an elliptical dual, as Geldner suggests, in which one of the pair is Agni Jātavedas and the other the "inspired praise poet."

The conclusion of the hymn, verses 8–11, is identical to III.4.8–11, so either the Viśvāmitra Āprī hymn has borrowed from this Vasiṣṭha hymn or vice versa. Presumably the first part of the hymn was enough to make each of the two hymns sufficiently unique to its gotra.

1. Today find pleasure in our *kindling wood*, Agni. Blaze aloft, sending up the smoke of the sacrifice.
   Touch the back of heaven with your tufts of hair; you will extend together with the rays of the sun.
2. With our sacrifices we will praise the greatness of *Narāśaṃsa*, worthy of the sacrifice, among these,
   the bright gods of strong resolve, the ones granting insight, who sweeten both offerings [=oblations and words].
3. The very skillful lord *to be invoked*, the truth-speaking messenger between the two world-halves,
   Agni kindled by Manu—him would we like Manu ever exalt for you for the sake of the rite.
4. Ritually serving, carrying it in a crouch, they spread *ritual grass* at the fire with reverence.
   Pouring (ghee) on it, o Adhvaryus, groom the ghee-backed, dappled (ritual grass) with the oblation.
5. Serving the gods, very attentive, they have laid *the doors* that seek the (divine) chariot open to the gods' realm.
   They jointly anoint like unwed girls in (marriage) assemblies the many double (doors) that lick (the chariot) like two mother cows a calf.
6. And the two great, heavenly young women, *Dawn and Night*, like a milk-cow that gives good milk,
   the two generous ones sitting on the ritual grass, summoned by many, worthy of the sacrifice—let them rest here for our safe passage.
7. I think you two inspired praise poets [=divine *Hotars*] at the sacrifices of the sons of Manu are both Jātavedas and are to perform the sacrifice.
   Raise up our rite at our calls. You will win desirable rewards (for us) among the gods.
8. *Bhāratī* along with the Bhāratīs, *Iḷā* along with the gods, Agni along with the sons of Manu,
   and *Sarasvatī* along with the Sārasvatas are near: let the three *goddesses* sit here on the ritual grass.
9. O god *Tvaṣṭar*, unbind for us this flow of semen and what prospers, granting (that)

from which a hero is born, fit for action and very skilled, who yokes up the pressing stones and desires the gods.

10. O *Lord of the Forest*, send it [=the sacrificial animal] to the gods. Agni, the Śamitar-priest, will sweeten the offering.
   And it is he, the more real Hotar [=Agni], who will offer sacrifice, since he knows the births of the gods.
11. Journey near here, o Agni, as you are kindled, on the same chariot with Indra and the swift gods.
   Let Aditi of good sons sit on our ritual grass. *Svāhā*! Let the immortal gods rejoice!

VII.3 (519) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

Verses 1cd and 9cd share a similar structure with an opening relative clause and concluding *pāvakáḥ* "pure" and thereby define the hymn. The last verse, which contains the poet's requests for blessings concluding with the usual Vasiṣṭha signature line, thus stands outside of hymn's principal development.

The hymn describes the emergence of fire from the friction sticks that give birth to it. Agni breaks free of these fire-churning sticks as he is fanned into flame (vs. 2). He then appears as a new-born, who never grows old (vs. 3). His flames rapidly advance over the wood (vs. 4), and then, in the middle verse of this principal section, he becomes the recipient of offerings (vs. 5). The descriptions of the fire after that point reflect its intensification through the offerings covered with ghee (vss. 6–7). The "strongholds" in verse 7 and in verse 8 (if this is how the ellipsis in that verse is to be completed) refer to Agni's now brightly shining flames. Their brilliance cuts through space, protecting the sacrificer and opening a way for the songs to reach the gods.

The hymn is notable especially for its skillful use of simile, especially in the first half of the hymn. The poet compares Agni to a horse (vs. 2), a weapon (vs. 4), a stallion (vs. 5), and a jewel (vs. 6), and he calls Agni a bull (vs. 3). In each case the same verb describes the action of the fire and of the object to which it is compared. So, for example, in verse 2 Agni and the horse both "snort" and both "stand free"—Agni of the fire-churning wood and the horse of its corral. In verse 5 the fire and a stallion are both "groomed," and in verse 6 both fire and a jewel "glow." In 4d we may have an exception to this pattern. In this case, the verb is *vivekṣi* which should be from √*viṣ* "toil at," and we reflect that analysis in our translation. But there is a pun, for *vivekṣi* can formally be derived from √*vic* "sift," an action that would apply to the barley in the simile. That is to say, whereas the same action applies to the simile and the frame in the previous examples, here the same verb form but not in the same meaning applies to the wood and the barley.

1. Make the god Agni along with the fires your best sacrificing messenger in the rite—
   he who is firmly established among mortals and possessing the truth, the pure one with burning head, with ghee as his food.
2. He has snorted like a hungry horse in his pasture, when he has stood free of his great enclosure.
   Then the wind fans his flame, and as always your track is black.
3. You the new-born bull, o Agni, whose ageless (flames), being kindled, climb upward—
   your ruddy smoke goes toward heaven, for as our messenger, o Agni, you speed to the gods.
4. You whose leading edge has spread out upon the earth when it has hungrily encircled its food with its jaws—
   your advance comes like a loosed weapon; wondrous one, you work over (the wood) like barley with your tongue.
5. In the evening and at dawn our men groom just that very young Agni like a stallion,
   sharpening their guest in his womb. His flame shines when the bull is offered oblations.
6. Your visage is lovely to see, o you of lovely face, when, like a jewel, you glow nearby.
   Your outburst comes like heaven's thunder. Like the shimmering sun, show your radiant beam.
7. In order that with our *svāhā*-call we would serve Agni for you all with libations and ghee-drenched oblations,
   protect us, Agni, by these immeasurable powers (of yours) and by your hundred metal strongholds.
8. Your unassailable (strongholds)—either those which are for your servant or those by which you will make a wide path for our manly songs—
   by these, son of strength, protect us altogether, both patrons and singers, o Jātavedas.
9. When, gleaming like a (heat-)purified axe, he has come out, glowing in his own form, in his own body—
   who, eagerly sought, has been born in his two mothers [=the friction sticks], the pure one strongly resolved to sacrifice to the gods—
10. Shine on us these things that bring good fortune, Agni. We would acquire a resolve based on good perception.
    Let all these things be for the praise singers and the chanter. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.4 (520) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

According to Geldner, this hymn expresses the wish for a son or for a replacement for a lost son. This is a wish found already in VII.1, but it is even more strongly articulated here. The best evidence for this interpretation is verses 7–8, which describe the importance of a son of one's own. Nonetheless, in our view, the subject of this hymn is more likely Agni than a son, and its concern is with a fire that has not come or is just coming to birth. The poet wants a fire of his own, which will bring wealth to him and preserve his life. To be sure, the hymn does contain an implicit analogy between Agni and a son, who likewise brings wealth and preserves the family.

One of the features of this hymn is the repetition of a word or of related words in successive lines or verses: *jagr̥bhré* (3b) and *gŕ̥bham* (3c); *uvóca* (3c) and *durókam* (3d); *agnír amŕ̥taḥ* (4b), *agnír amŕ̥tān* (5b), and *agnír amŕ̥tasya* (6a); *pári ṣadāma* (6d) and *pariṣádyam* (7a); and *áraṇasya* (7a) and *áraṇaḥ* (8a). Other repetitions occur at a greater distance. Thus verse 8, the third from the last verse, has *grábhāya* (8a) and *ókaḥ* (8c), echoing the repetitions within verse 3. This technique does not occur in the first, introductory verse, nor in the last two verses, which are also VI.15.12 and VII.3.10 respectively and which may have been borrowed from these hymns. These verbal repetitions are a challenge to translate, particularly because in some cases the poet uses the words in different senses. So, for example, *amŕ̥ta* refers to the "immortal" gods in verse 5 but to "living" human beings in verse 6. In verse 6 *pári √sad* describes the sacrificers "sitting around" the fire, but in verse 7 it probably refers to sequestering something or keeping it separate by drawing a notional circle around it.

1. Bring forth your offering and your thought, well-purified, to the flaming ray of light, to Agni,
   who with wisdom goes among all races, the divine ones and those descended from Manu.
2. Let Agni be sharp-witted, though of tender age, since he has been born as his mother's youngest,
   who with his flaming teeth completely grips the pieces of wood. He completely eats his food all at once, even though it be abundant.
3. In the company and before the face of this god, the luminous one whom mortals have accepted as their own,
   who is at home with human ownership, but beyond domestication, Agni flames for Āyu.
4. Here the prescient poet has been installed among non-poets, immortal Agni among mortals.
   Do not become angry with us here, o strong one. We would ever have good thoughts in your company.

5. Who has sat here upon the womb made by the gods—for Agni has surpassed the deathless (gods) in his resolve (to sacrifice)—
   that all-nurturing child do plants, trees, and the land carry.
6. Because Agni is the master of what is free of death [=alive] and abundant, (because) he is the master of giving a wealth of men,
   lacking men, let us not (sit around) you, o strong one; lacking lifebreath or friendship, let us not sit around (you).
7. Because the legacy of an outsider is to be "sat around" [=sequestered], might we be lords of our own wealth.
   What is born of another is no posterity (for us), o Agni. Do not milk dry the paths (even) of an inconspicuous man.
8. For an outsider, (even one) of great kindness, is not to be accepted as one's own, nor is one born of another's belly to be well regarded in one's thinking.
   He returns again to his home. Let the overpowering, prizewinning horse come here to us anew.
9. You, Agni—protect (us) from the rapacious one, and you, mighty one—(protect) us from reproach.
   Let the smoke-enwrapped (oblation) come entirely to you, to the fold (of the gods); and let thousandfold desirable wealth (come) entirely.
10. Shine on us these things that bring good fortune, Agni. We would acquire a resolve based on good perception.
   Let all these things be for the praise singers and the chanter. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.5 (521) Agni Vaiśvānara

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn invokes Agni as both the fire on earth and the sun in heaven. More specifically, Agni is a tribal fire, which here represents an aggregation of clans in the Pūru tribe (vs. 3). This hymn thus accords with VII.19.3, in which Indra also supports the Pūru tribe, but contrasts with VII.18.13, in which Indra supports Sudās, the enemy of the Pūru. As Proferes (2007: 46–49) details, it is as a tribal fire and as the sun that Agni is called Vaiśvānara, a name repeated in each of the first five verses and then again in the last two (8–9).

The hymn begins with a statement of Agni's presence in heaven and on earth, nurtured by both the gods and priests (vs. 1). In the second verse Agni is called the master of both flowing and pooling waters, a theme echoed in verse 8, the second to last verse, in which Agni is asked to send the "refreshing drink," which might be the rain for humans or the soma for the gods or both. Having descended

to earth, Agni's radiance extends to the Ārya clans (vs. 2cd). In verse 3 the *víśaḥ… aśiknīḥ* "dark clans" are Dasyus (vs. 6), but they are not dark because they are "dark-skinned," as the description is often interpreted, but rather because they represent powers of darkness opposed to the Āryas (cf. Hock 1999). Note that the brilliance of Agni in 3cd breaks apart the "dark clans" and, as light, disperses darkness. Or likewise in verse 6 Agni drives away the Dasyus, providing a "broad light" for Āryas. As fire and sun, Agni extends his light throughout the worlds (vs. 4). In verse 5, the middle verse of the hymn, the poet concretizes Agni as the present sacrificial fire, who guards and prospers the different communities and as both the sacrificial fire and the sun, both of which appear in the early morning as beacons of the day.

1. Bring forth a song to the mighty Agni, to the spoked wheel of heaven and earth,
   who as Vaiśvānara has grown strong in the lap of all the immortals through the watchful (priests).
2. Sought after in heaven, Agni has been placed on earth as the leader of the rivers and the bull of standing waters.
   He radiates outward toward the clans descended from Manu: Vaiśvānara having grown strong according to his wish.
3. The dark clans went breaking ranks, leaving their supplies, from fear of you,
   o Vaiśvānara, when you shone, breaking their strongholds, blazing for Pūru, o Agni.
4. Heaven and earth, (each) in its three parts, follow your commandment, o Agni Vaiśvānara.
   You stretch throughout the two world-halves with your radiance, blazing with your inexhaustible blaze.
5. Resounding ghee-rich songs—bellowing tawny mares—follow you, Agni,
   the lord of settlements, the charioteer of riches, Vaiśvānara, the beacon of the dawns and of the days.
6. The good (gods) installed their lordship in you, for they find pleasure in your resolve, o you having Mitra's might.
   You drove the Dasyus away from their home, o Agni, giving birth to broad light for the Ārya.
7. Being born in the highest heaven, at once you protect the fold on every side like Vāyu.
   Giving birth to living beings, you cry out, doing service to their descendants, Jātavedas.
8. Send the heaven-bright refreshing drink for us, o Agni Vaiśvānara, o Jātavedas,
   by which you swell your bounty and broad fame for the pious mortal, o you who grant all wishes.

9. Bind wealth that brings many cattle to our generous patrons, o Agni, as well as the prize of victory worthy of fame.
   O Vaiśvānara, along with the Rudras and Vasus, offer great protection to us, o Agni.

VII.6 (522) Agni Vaiśvānara

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

In its first verse this poem implicitly connects Agni with Varuṇa and Indra. In 1ab Agni is called a "universal king and lord" to be honored "by the settlements." This description recalls Varuṇa and his rule over settled communities. Then in the second hemistich Agni's acts are explicitly compared to the heroic deeds of Indra during war. The description of Agni as the "breaker"—if that is the meaning of *dārú* in 1d—is appropriate to him: in X.69.3d the poet asks of Agni *sá vā́jaṃ darṣi* "Break out victory's prize." But the word also anticipates *puraṃdará* "breaker of strongholds" in 2c, here an epithet of Agni but normally one of Indra. In 2cd the two gods, Indra and Varuṇa, are combined in Agni through the description of him as *puraṃdará* and through reference to his *vratá* "commandment," a term that is conceptually and etymologically connected to Varuṇa. But then in verse 3 Agni takes on the persona of Indra more exclusively as one who pursues the Paṇis, who are the great enemies of Indra in his destruction of the Vala cave. The reference to Agni as the one who brings the dawn in verses 4–5 is appropriate to the fire of the morning sacrifice, but it also continues the reference to the Vala story, telling of the release of the dawns. In verse 5cd Nahuṣ is the ancestor of the Nahuṣa, a tribe of whom Agni takes possession. In I.31.11 Agni is the clanlord of the Nahuṣa, but it is still not clear why they are mentioned here, although doing so does bring Agni's action down to earth and perhaps into the present. The last two verses give Agni possession of the whole earth, including the goods and peoples on it.

1. (I proclaim) the praise of the universal king and lord, of the man to be celebrated by the settlements.
   Extolling the deeds of the mighty one—I extol the breaker—I proclaim them like those of Indra.
2. They urge on the poet and beacon (of the sacrifice), the wellspring and light beam from the stone, the luck and rule of the two world-halves.
   By my songs, I seek to gain the ancient and great commandments of Agni the breaker of strongholds.
3. Down with those of no intelligence, those tying in knots, those of disdainful words: the Paṇis, not giving hospitality, not giving strength, not giving sacrifices.

Onward and onward Agni has pursued those Dasyus. The first has made the last to be without sacrifices.

4. The best of men, who by his powers has put those (Dawns) in the east, though they were finding joy in the western darkness—
   I shall sing to that Agni, master of the good, the one unable to be bent, who subdues those doing battle.
5. Who bent the ramparts by his deadly weapons, who made the Dawns to have our compatriot [=Agni] as their husband,
   he, the young Agni, having halted the (clans) of Nahuṣ, made (those) clans give tribute through his powers.
6. Under whose protection all the peoples approach in their separate ways, asking for his favor,
   Agni Vaiśvānara has sat here in the lap of the two world-halves, of his parents, according to his wish.
7. The god Vaiśvānara has taken the goods on the land for his own at the rising of the sun.
   From the lower sea and from the higher one, from heaven and from earth, Agni has taken them.

VII.7 (523) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet invokes the powerful Agni—the god who acts with strength (*sahasānám*) in the first verse and is summoned as the "son of strength" (*sūno sahasaḥ*) in the last. Within this recursive frame the poet follows the descent of Agni from the heaven onto the earth. In 1d Agni runs at "a measured pace" and is found "among the gods in his own person," that is, in the form of the burning sun. He is then invited to journey to earth (vs. 2) and to the sacrificial place as a participant in the rite (vs. 3). Still, Agni remains simultaneously earthly and heavenly. His "two mothers" or "mother and father" in 3c are Earth and Heaven, but they can also be the two fire-churning sticks, the *aráṇī̆*. In verse 4 Agni's birth is set squarely on earth and at the sacrifice, where he assumes his role as chief priest of the rite (vss. 4–5). Verse 6 presents an interesting problem since it is not clear who is spoken about. In our view the subject is most likely the gods, to whom the poet now returns at the end of the hymn, thus balancing the reference to them in verses 1–2. But pādas a and cd can also describe the patrons of the sacrifice and b can parenthetically refer to the priests, as Geldner suggests. This ambiguity is likely intentional, allowing a double reference to gods and humans.

1. For you I shall urge on Agni like a prizewinning horse, the very god acting with strength, by my homage:

"Become for us the knowing messenger of the rite!" Running with measured pace, he has been found among the gods in his own person.

2. Journey here along your own paths, o Agni, as the delighting one who takes pleasure in companionship with the gods;
(journey) here along the back of the earth, bellowing with outbursts, burning everything, burning the wood at will with your jaws.
3. The sacrifice is turned eastward, for the ritual grass is rightly laid. Agni is pleased, invoked like a Hotar,
being summoned here to the two mothers [=Earth and Heaven] who fulfill all desires, from whom, o youngest one, you have been born as the very kind one.
4. At once the discerning descendants of Manu gave birth in the rite to the charioteer who is theirs.
As their clanlord, he has been placed in the home of the clans—he the delighting Agni of honeyed speech, possessing the truth.
5. Having come here, the chosen conveyor (of oblations) has been seated at the seat of men—Agni, the ritual formulator and distributor,
whom Heaven and Earth have made strong, the one fulfilling all desires, to whom the Hotar sacrifices.
6. These surpass everything through their heavenly brilliance—the manly ones who fashioned the solemn utterance and its desirable reward,
who, heeding them, extend the clans and who will reflect upon this, my truth.
7. And now we Vasiṣṭhas beseech you, the master of good things, o Agni, son of strength.
You have obtained refreshment for the singers of praise and for our generous (patrons). – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.8 (524) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Commenting on verse 4, Proferes (2007: 37) rightly says that this Agni, the fire of the Bharatas, is linked to the military power of the tribe, and it is he, not the king or the warriors, who is credited for the victory over the enemy tribe of the Pūrus. There are hints of the extent of Agni's power to repel the Pūrus in the repetition of *ví* "afar" in verses 2, 3, and 4. Likewise, the poet describes how Agni, the son of strength (vs. 7), becomes mighty (vs. 2) and makes his body strong (vs. 5). In an interesting twist, Agni's bodily strength, which is marked by his brightness, will drive human bodily illness into darkness (vs. 6).

1. Our compatriot king is kindled by our homage, upon whose face ghee is offered.
   Our men urgently summon him with oblations. Here, at the head of the dawns, Agni has been set ablaze.
2. And here has this very great one been found—the delighting Hotar, the young Agni of Manu.
   Let loose, he has spread afar his radiance upon the earth. Whose wheel-rim is black, he has grown mighty by the plants.
3. In what way, Agni, will you shine our intricate hymn afar, and what self-resolve will you put into action when you are proclaimed?
   When would we become lords and winners of hard-gained wealth that brings success, o very generous one?
4. Farther and farther is this Agni of Bharata famed when his lofty radiance gleams afar like the sun.
   He who dominated the Pūru in battles blazes as our glowing, godly guest.
5. There will surely be many offerings poured in you, and you will become benevolent in all your faces.
   Though praised, o Agni, you are (already) renowned, as you are being sung. By yourself make your own body strong, o well-born one.
6. Here is our speech: winning hundreds along with thousands, it should be born doubly lofty for Agni,
   so that he, the smasher of demons, will become for his praisers and his friend [=the singer] brilliant good luck that chases sickness into hiding.
7. And now we Vasiṣṭhas beseech you, the master of good things, o Agni, son of strength.
   You have obtained refreshment for the praisers and our generous (patrons). – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.9 (525) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The appearance of Agni as the fire of the morning sacrifice and also as the sun marks the beginning of the sacrifice, and it is he who establishes the two signs of the sacrifice: the oblations given to the gods and the wealth received in return by humans (vs. 1). The exchange between sacrificers and gods is reasserted at the end of the penultimate verse (vs. 5cd), which urges Agni to sacrifice to the gods in order that they will benefit humans. The theme of exchange is continued in verse 2a, since

Agni's "strong resolve" is to sacrifice, and as a result of this resolve he opens the pens of the Paṇis and, as in the Vala story, lets loose cattle, symbols of both wealth and the dawns. In the latter part of this verse the function of Agni in promoting the exchange between gods and sacrificers is suggested by word play that turns on the ambiguity of *arká*, which can mean either "chant" or "flame," and of the compound *purubhójas*, either "bringing sustenance" or "consuming sustenance." That is, Agni purifies either the chant that creates food for humans or the flames that consume it on behalf of the gods.

In 3ab, in a different kind of word play, Agni bears the names of three gods, all of whom, like Agni, have roles in carrying out the ritual: Aditi is the embodiment of the "Guiltlessness" of one who performs the rite correctly, Vivasvant is the first sacrificer (as Geldner notes), and Mitra is the deity of the sacrificial alliance between gods and humans. The name Vivasvant may also carry its appellative significance "shining forth," which would also fit the fire. In 3cd Agni is brought into connection with two groups of goddesses, who are complicit in the birth of Agni: the Dawns, with whom he appears in the early morning, and the Waters, who give birth to Agni and place him in the "fruitful" plants, from which the fire emerges. There is a final word play in verse 6c, where *puruṇīthā́ . . . jarasva* can mean that, as a god, Agni should awaken to the musical modes of the ritual chants or, as a priest, should sing musical modes through the sounds of the fire. There is even battle imagery in the latter part of the hymn: in verse 4 Agni enters the "melee" and in verse 5 with Agni's help Vasiṣṭha destroys the Jarūtha, probably a demonized enemy who is part of the Vasiṣṭha family lore. In that context, *puruṇīthā́* could also have a secondary reference to warriors' strategems by which wealth is won.

1. The lover of the Dawns has awakened from their lap, the delighting
   Hotar, the best of sage poets, the pure one.
   He sets in place the beacon for both races: the oblations among the gods
   and wealth among the good ritual performers.
2. He of strong resolve, who (opens) up the doors of the Paṇis as he purifies
   the chant that brings much sustenance for us,
   he, the delighting Hotar and the housemaster of the clans, has become
   visible, across the darkness of the nights.
3. The sage poet who is never misled—Aditi and Vivasvant, Mitra of good
   fellowship and our kind guest—
   with shimmering radiance, he radiates at the head of the Dawns. The
   infant of the Waters has entered the fruitful ones.
4. The one to be invoked by you among the generations of Manu, entering
   the melee, Jātavedas blazed.
   He who radiates forth with a radiance beautiful to see—cows awaken in
   response to him as he is kindled.
5. O Agni, travel on your mission toward the gods—intend us no harm!—
   along with the band that creates poetic formulations.

Sacrifice to Sarasvatī, to the Maruts, to the Aśvins, and to the Waters, and to all the gods so that they grant wealth.

6. Kindling you, o Agni, Vasiṣṭha smashed Jarūtha. Sacrifice to Plenitude for riches.

   Jātavedas, awaken to many modes. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.10 (526) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet is particularly fond of alliteration and assonance, which he uses extensively in the hymn. The first words of the first verse *uṣó ná jāráḥ* echo its last *uśatī́r ajīgaḥ*, and throughout the verse the poet pairs initial sounds: *pr̥thú pā́jaḥ, dávidyutad dī́dyat*, and *bhāti bhāṣā́*, in what may be a sonic representation of the flickering fire repeatedly flaming. In verses 2 and 3 he strings sets of three repetitions: *dravád dūtó devayā́vā* (2d) and *susaṃdŕ̥śaṃ suprátīkaṃ sváñcam* (3c). He then returns to pairs in verse 4: *rudráṃ rudrébhiḥ, ādityébhir áditim*. These repetitions abruptly stop at the last verse, which states matter-of-factly the principal theme of the hymn first enunciated at verse 2: Agni brings offerings to the gods in heaven and wealth to mortals on earth. There is a variation on this theme in verse 4, in which Agni not only conveys oblations to the gods (as in vs. 3), but also conveys the gods to earth at the sacrificial place.

1. Like the lover of Dawn, flaring, shining, and blazing, he has held up his broad face.

   The bull, the blazing fallow bay, radiates with his radiance. Urging on our eager insights, he has awakened them.

2. Like the sun, at the dawning of the Dawns he has shone, stretching forth the sacrifice, like fire-priests their thought.

   Distinguishing the kinds (of gods and mortals), the god Agni (comes) here at a run as a messenger, seeking the gods and best bringing gain (to mortals).

3. Our songs and thoughts, serving the gods, come to Agni, seeking a share in wealth,

   to him of lovely appearance, of lovely face, and of lovely look, to him conveying oblations as the spoked wheel of the descendants of Manu.

4. O Agni, convey Indra to us along with the Vasus, lofty Rudra along with the Rudras,

   Aditi belonging to all peoples along with the Ādityas, and Br̥haspati granting all wishes along with the reciters of verses.

5. The fire-priests invoke him, the delighting Hotar, the youngest one; the clans invoke Agni at the rites,
for he has become the protector of riches on earth and the unwearying messenger to bring sacrifice to the gods.

VII.11 (527) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The keywords in this hymn are *ā́* "hither" and *ihá* "here." The poet asks that Agni come "hither" (vs. 1c) to sacrifice "here" (vss. 1d, 3c). And not only should Agni come, but he should also bring the gods "hither" (vs. 5a) to enjoy the sacrifice "here" (vs. 5b). The last pāda—excluding the Vasiṣṭha signature pāda—presents an interesting twist, for the poet asks that this sacrifice, the sacrifice that is at this place on earth, that is here where he has asked Agni to come and here where he is to bring the gods, be placed "in heaven among the gods" (vs. 5c). At the end, therefore, what is present and local should become celestial and divine.

Verse 3 of this hymn presents an additional puzzle. What does it mean when it says that good things become visible in Agni "three times at night"? Following Sāyaṇa, Geldner argues that "night" here means the whole day, and therefore the reference is to the three soma-pressings. Recognizing the difficulty of this interpretation, Oldenberg wonders whether there might be a reference here to an Atirātra or "overnight" rite. We agree and think that the reference here is to the rites that take place at night. But what rites these are or why "good things" are visible in the fire during them remains unclear.

1. You are the great sign of the rite; without you the immortals find no elation.
Travel hither in the same chariot with all the gods. Agni, take your seat here as the first Hotar.
2. Bringing offerings, the descendants of Manu always invoke you, the nimble one, to act as messenger.
Upon whose sacred grass you sit with the gods, o Agni, for him the days become bright shining.
3. Three times at night, good things become visible within you for the pious mortal.
As you did for Manu, o Agni, sacrifice here to the gods. Become our messenger, protecting us from curses.
4. Agni is master of the rite reaching aloft; Agni, of every offering that is made,
for the good (gods) rejoice in his intention, and so the gods established him as the conveyor of oblations.

5. Agni, convey the gods hither to consume the oblations. Let those whose chief is Indra find elation here.
   Place this sacrifice here in heaven among the gods. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.12 (528) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This brief hymn describes Agni's appearance "in his own home" (vs. 1b) and "in the household" (vs. 2b), but although he is a domestic fire, Agni also extends to heaven and earth and the four directions (vs. 1cd). Agni's principal function here is to protect the household against unnamed difficulties (vss. 2a, 2c) and accusations (vs. 2c). It is because he protects the family that he is Varuṇa and Mitra (vs. 3a), since these two gods guard the structure of the household and of the larger society.

1. We have come with great reverence to the youngest one, who, kindled, shines in his own home—
   to him of shimmering radiance between the two wide world-halves, to him facing out in every direction, receiving the well-poured offering.
2. Overcoming all difficulties by his greatness, Agni is praised in the household as Jātavedas.
   He will guard us from difficulty and reproach, (guard) both us, who are singing, and our generous patrons.
3. You, Agni, are Varuṇa and Mitra. You do the Vasiṣṭhas make strong through their thoughts.
   In you let there be good things easy to gain. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.13 (529) Agni Vaiśvānara

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

In each of the three verses of this hymn, the poet calls Agni *vaiśvānara* (vss. 1d, 2d, 3c), thereby identifying the emerging ritual fire with the rising sun. Because Agni is the sun, he blazes everywhere, smashes enemies, fills heaven and earth with his light, releases the gods from the curse (of darkness), looks upon all beings, and encompasses the earth. The poet brings to Agni his hymn as an offering in the hope that with these powers Agni will bring success to the poet's words.

1. Bring forth to Agni—blazing everywhere, granting insight, smashing (enemy) lords—our thought, our vision.
   Being pleased (with it), I bring it, like an offering on the ritual grass, to Vaiśvānara for him to hold fast to our thoughts.
2. You, o Agni, blazing with your blaze, filled the two world-halves as you were coming to birth.
   You released the gods from the curse, o Vaiśvānara, Jātavedas, through your greatness.
3. Since, o Agni, when just born, you surveyed living beings like a herdsman his animals—alert and earth-encircling,
   o Vaiśvānara, find a way for our formulation. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.14 (530) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: br̥hatī 1, triṣṭubh 2, 3

This hymn marks the raising of the sacrificial fire by placing kindling, by pouring ghee, and by reciting praises and invocations, which verbal products, as much as the wood and ghee, bring the fire to life. Noteworthy in this hymn is the repetition of an emphatic *vayám* "we" at the beginning of each pāda in verse 2, continuing its placement in 1d. The poet is drawing the god's attention not only to the forms of ritual service he is being offered, but also to the poet and his people as those offering that service.

1. To Jātavedas with our kindling wood, to the god with our invocations to the gods,
   to him of bright flame with our oblations—to Agni we would offer service with reverence.
2. We would honor you with our kindling wood, o Agni; we would offer service with our good praise, o you worthy of the sacrifice—
   we with ghee, o Hotar of the rite, and we with our oblation, o god of noble flame.
3. Travel here with the gods to our invocation to the gods, taking pleasure in our *vaṣaṭ*-call, o Agni.
   We would be those offering service to you, a god. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.15 (531) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
15 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn divides into five tr̥cas. The first triplet of verses defines Agni as the clan fire, which lives close to the family and protects it. In the second triplet Agni is invoked to be present as the fire of the sacrifice. Structurally, the second triplet replicates the first, since the second two verses in each form a single syntactic unit that begins with a relative clause and continues with an imperative. This repeated structure iconically suggests the identity of the clan fire and the sacrificial fire, and in the third triplet the sacrificial fire and the clan fire are explicitly blended. Agni represents the clanlord and he receives the sacrificial oblations (vs. 7). Through the sacrifice Agni provides the clan with "heroes," the male children who guarantee the prosperity of the clan. In verse 9, as also in VII.1.14, the *ákṣarā* refers to both a syllable—its primary meaning—and a cow that always gives milk. Thus, the "syllable" of the poets comes with thousands of syllables, and because their speech is an inexhaustible cow, it brings thousands of cattle.

The fourth tr̥ca takes Agni into the sphere of the minor Ādityas, Savitar, Bhaga, and the mysterious Diti, who is here the personification of giving embodied in the sacrificial fire. Geldner suggests that Diti is the female counterpart of Bhaga, but Diti is as easily male (and we believe more likely so) as female. Diti and Aditi, the mother of the Ādityas, appear to be in a systematic grammatical relationship, with the latter being a negated version of the former. But here Diti is not the opposite of Aditi but seemingly one of her children, since Diti appears alongside other Ādityas.

If the fourth tr̥ca emphasizes the gifts of the Agni, the last appeals for his power to protect from bad times and evil people.

1. Pour the oblation in his mouth for him to be reverently approached, for him granting rewards,
   who is closest friendship for us.
2. Who has sat down in every house, (presiding) over the five peoples—
   the sage poet and houselord, the youthful one—
3. Let him, Agni, guard our household possessions in every direction,
   and let him protect us from difficult straits.

4. Now I give birth to a new praise song for Agni, the falcon of heaven.
   Will he not win for us what is good?
5. Whose glories are eagerly sought to be seen, like the wealth of one rich in heroes—
   (the glories of him) who flames at the beginning of the sacrifice—
6. Let him pursue this *vaṣaṭ*-call. Agni takes pleasure in our songs,
   as the best sacrificer, as the conveyor of oblations.

7. We would establish you as the brilliant one, o clanlord to be attained, o god,
as the one having good heroes, o Agni, receiving the poured offering.
8. Shine throughout the nights and dawns. Through you we have good fires;
seeking us, you have good heroes.
9. Our men, inspired poets, come to you with their visions in order to win gain,
as does their syllable [/their inexhaustible cow] bringing thousands.

10. The brightly blazing, immortal Agni wards off demons—
the blazing pure one to be invoked.
11. Bring us gifts, being their master, o young (son) of strength,
and let Bhaga give us a desirable reward.
12. Agni, you (give) the glory that accompanies heroes. And god Savitar and Bhaga (give),
and Diti gives a desirable reward to us.

13. Agni, guard us from difficult straits. As ever, o god, as the unaging one burn back those doing harm
with your hottest (fires).
14. So then, o you who are unchallengeable, become for us a great metal
fortress with a hundred coils to protect our men.
15. Guard us from difficult straits and from him wishing evil, o you dawning in the evening,
by day and at night, o undeceivable one.

VII.16 (532) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
12 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

The hymn emphasizes the exchange mediated by Agni, who takes the oblations to the gods (or brings the gods to the oblations) and who offers sustenance to the sacrificers (see esp. vs. 2cd). Because he thus nourishes both gods and humans, he is the "child of nourishment" (vs. 1). The poet repeatedly mentions the patron or patrons of the rite alongside the priests. Agni himself is not only the Hotar, who recites, and the Potar, who purifies the soma, but also the householder, who is the patron of the rite (vs. 5). In verse 6 the poet calls on Agni to sharpen not only the priests but also the one who "praises well" and "is skillful," a combination of the ability to recite and the ability to perform the rites. The latter may be a priest, but it might be again the householder, who is also a participant in the rite and who owns, in a sense, all of the priestly functions. In verses 7–10 the poet asks Agni to bless generous patrons,

who give cattle (vs. 7) and horses along with other gifts (vs. 10). In the final two verses the poet addresses his fellow priests, urging them to prepare ample offerings for the gods, but at the end he especially mentions the rewards of wealth and good men for "the pious man," who again is likely the householder.

1. For you with this homage I summon Agni, the child of nourishment,
   the dear, most visible circle of spokes that makes the rite good, the immortal messenger for all.
2. He will hitch up his two flame-red (horses) that bring nurture to all. He will run swiftly, when he receives the well-poured offering.
   With its good formulations and with good labor, the sacrifice belongs to the good (gods), and the divine gift belongs to the peoples.

3. Upward has risen the flame belonging to him, the one giving rewards, when he receives the poured offering;
   upward the ruddy smoke, touching heaven: our men kindle Agni.
4. We make you our most glorious messenger. Convey the gods here to pursue (our oblations).
   Son of strength, give everything that nourishes mortals; give that which we beg of you.

5. Agni, you are the houselord; you the Hotar in the rite;
   you the attentive Potar, o you who grant all wishes—sacrifice and seek out a desirable reward (for us).
6. Create treasure for the sacrificer, o you of good resolve, for you are the grantor of treasure.
   Sharpen us—every priest—upon the truth, and also him who, praising well, is skillful.

7. Agni, let our patrons be dear to you, who receive the well-poured offering—
   they, the generous guides of the peoples, who distribute pens of cattle.
8. Those in whose house Iḷā [/Libation] sits down, with her hands of ghee and filled to the brim—
   save them from deceit and blame, o powerful one. Hold out to us far-famed protection.

9. As the more knowing conveyor, with your delighting tongue and your mouth
   convey wealth to our generous (patrons), Agni, and sweeten our gift of oblations.
10. Who give gifts and rewards of horses with a desire for great fame—
    rescue them from difficult straits with your rescuers and with your hundred fortresses, o youngest one.

11. The god Wealth-Giver [=Agni] wishes your full outpouring.
    Pour it out or fill it up: only then will the god honor you.
12. The gods made him, the attentive Hotar of the rite, their conveyor (of oblations).
    Agni grants treasure and an abundance of good heroes to him who worships, to the pious man.

VII.17 (533) Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: dvipadā triṣṭubh

Quite reasonably, Oldenberg holds that this hymn, the last of the Agni hymns of VII, is an addition to the original collection. It is a general description of the preparations for the sacrifice (vss. 1, 2), its performance (vss. 3, 4), and its rewards (vs. 5). The last two verses reaffirm the relationship of Agni to the gods (vs. 6) and to mortals (vs. 7).

1. Agni, be kindled by our good kindling and let the ritual grass become spread widely.
2. And let the eager doors gape open, and, (o Agni), convey the eager gods here to this place.
3. Agni, pursue them with the offering, sacrifice to the gods. Make the rites good, Jātavedas.
4. Jātavedas will make the rites good. He will sacrifice to the gods, and he will please the immortals.
5. Win all desirable rewards, o attentive one, and let our hopes come true today.
6. And, o Agni, the gods have established you here as the conveyor of oblations, as the child of nourishment.
7. We would be those serving you, the god. Being beseeched, you will grandly distribute treasures to us.

VII.18 (534) Battle of the Ten Kings: Indra (1–21), Sudās Paijavana's Dānastuti (22–25)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
25 verses: triṣṭubh

This very famous hymn, the first in Vasiṣṭha's Indra cycle, relates, if we can use so positive a term, the so-called Battle of the Ten Kings, in which King Sudās and his Bharata followers, with Indra on their side, defeat an alliance of ten kings, which

includes their former allies, the Pūrus. The hymn has long been used as a major source for the reconstruction of R̥gvedic history, perhaps somewhat too credulously, as the description of the battle is anything but clear and is also clearly full of puns, derisive word plays, phonological deformations of the names of opponents, and other poetic tricks, all couched in slangy language. Since the "historical" dimension of the hymn has been fully treated elsewhere (see especially Schmidt 1980 and Witzel 1995a), we will not discuss it further here.

The hymn falls into three parts. Verses 1–4 recall the aid that Indra has given us in the past and ask for his help and gifts now. The poet names himself at the very end of verse 4, which forms a clever ring with verse 1: the description of Indra in 1d, ... *vásu* ... *vániṣṭhaḥ* "best gainer of goods," is condensed into the poet's own name in 4d, *vás(u)(ván)iṣṭhaḥ* → *vásiṣṭhaḥ*. The language and contents of these first four verses are well-crafted but unremarkable.

The battle proper and its immediate aftermath occupy verses 5–21; the battle itself takes place in and around the Paruṣṇī River (see esp. vss. 8–10), whose course seems to have been diverted during the battle and in which a number of the combatants seem to have drowned. The account, especially the earlier verses, seems to mirror the confusion and chaos of battle itself (reminiscent on a much smaller scale of Tolstoy's great accounts of the unintelligible disorder of battle in *War and Peace*, or of Stephen Crane's in *The Red Badge of Courage*). The confusion begins to sort itself out as Indra's role becomes more prominently featured. It is emphasized several times that the forces of Sudās were outnumbered but that Indra was able to marshal this overmastered force to defeat their foes (esp. vss. 14, 17). This section ends with several verses celebrating the victory and Indra's benevolence (20–21).

The final four verses (22–25) are a dānastuti, praising the extravagant gifts of Sudās to the poet, ending (vs. 25) by commending Sudās to the protection of the Maruts.

1. Since with you beside (them), o Indra, our fathers, the singers, also won
   all things of value—
   because in you are the good milking cows, in you the horses—you are the
   best gainer of goods for one who serves the gods.
2. Because you are simply dwelling peacefully like a king with his wives,
   help (us) throughout the days, being preeminent as a wise poet.
   O bounteous one, ornament our hymns with cows and horses; whet us,
   who are devoted to you, for wealth.
3. These gladdening hymns, contending with each other here, seeking the
   gods, have reverently approached you.
   Let the path of your wealth lead our way. Might we be in your good
   thought, Indra, in your shelter.
4. Wishing to milk you like a milk-cow in good pasture, I, Vasiṣṭha, have
   dispatched sacred formulations to you.
   Everyone says that you alone are my herdsman. Let Indra come to our
   good thought.

5. Even the floods that had spread out—Indra made them into fords easy to cross for Sudās.
   Śimyu, who was vaunting himself above our newer speech—he [=Indra] made him into the flotsam of the rivers and his taunts (too).
6. Turvaśa Yakṣu (the "sacrificer") was himself the offering cake—also the Matsyas ["fish"], whetted down (in their quest) for wealth, like fish in water.
   The Bhr̥gus and the Druhyus (just) followed orders. (Former) comrade crossed (former) comrade on the two opposing (sides).
7. The Pakthas ["cooked oblations"?] and the Bhalānases ["raiders"?] spoke out, and the Alinas, the Viṣānins, and the Śivas:
   "The feasting companion of the Ārya [=Indra?], who led (us?) hither—with desire for cattle for the Tr̥tsus he has gone with battle against superior men [=us]."
8. The ill-intentioned ones without insight, causing Aditi to abort, diverted (the course of) the (river) Paruṣṇī.
   With his greatness he [=Indra? Turvaśa?] enveloped the earth, being master (of it). The poet lay there, being perceived as (just) a (sacrificial) animal.
9. They came to the Paruṣṇī, to a failed end as if to their (real) goal. Not even the swift one made it home for supper.
   Indra made those without alliance (to us) subject to Sudās, those, easy to thrust away, who, (though) in Manu's (race), were of gelded speech.
10. They went like cows without a cowherd from a pasture, (though) seeming (to go) to an alliance properly concluded—
    the Pr̥śnigus, propelled down to the dappled one [/P(a)r(u)ṣṇī]. The teams and the battlers [?] followed orders.
11. He who as king with desire for fame has strewn down the one and twenty peoples of the two Vaikarṇas,
    just as a wonder-worker "whets down" the ritual grass on the seat. The champion Indra made a gush of them.
12. Then famous old Kavaṣa he wrenched down into the waters, and *Anu and Druhyu—he with the mace in his arms.
    The ones devoted to you, who cheered you on, (were) choosing there your partnership for their partnership.
13. In an instant Indra split open all their fortified places, their seven strongholds, with his might.
    He shared out the patrimony of the descendant of Anu to Tr̥tsu. We defeated the Pūru of scornful speech at the rite of distribution.
14. The cow-seeking Anu and Druhyu people fell down to sleep—sixty hundred, six thousand (of them).
    (But on the other side there were just) sixty heroes with six on top, in search of (Indra's) favor. All these are the manly deeds of Indra.

15. These Tr̥tsus, constantly laboring alongside Indra, ran like waters released downward.
    The ill-allied ones, meting (their supplies) out with a miser's eye, (yet) left behind all their goodies for Sudās.
16. The (mere) half a hero, who drinks the cooked oblation without Indra, who vaunts himself, did he thrust away to the ground.
    Indra confounded the battle fury of the one who confounds the battle fury (of others). He took to the course of the path, being master of it.
17. Even with a feeble thing he performed this unique (deed): he smote even the lioness with a wether.
    Indra hewed down the poles with a pin. He handed over all the goodies to Sudās.
18. "Because one after the other, the rivals become subject to you, procure the subjugation even of vaunting Bheda.
    Who(ever) commits an offense against mortals who praise, smash your sharp mace down on him, o Indra."
19. The Yamunā (River) helped Indra, as did the Tr̥tsus. He despoiled Bheda there entirely,
    and the Ajas, Śighras, and the Yakṣus brought horses's heads as tribute.
20. Neither your favors nor your riches, o Indra, can be entirely surveyed, through the previous dawns, nor through the current ones.
    You smote even the one who fancied himself a little god. You cut down Śambara from the lofty (mountain) by yourself.
21. Those from (this?) house who reached elation in devotion to you— Parāśara, Śatayātu, Vasiṣṭha—
    they did not neglect their partnership with you, who provided for (them). So now day-bright (dawns) will dawn forth for the patrons.

22. Two hundred (head) of cattle from the descendant of Devavant, two chariots carrying brides from Sudās—
    deserving the gift of Paijavana, o Agni, I circle around (it), like a Hotar the seat (of the sacrificial victim), as I "rasp" [=sing].
23. The four gift(-horse)s of Paijavana, along with their allotted (gear), covered with pearls, (convey) me exclusively.
    The silvery ones of Sudās who tread the earth convey me and my progeny, for my progeny to be famed.
24. He whose fame the Apportioner has apportioned to every head between the two wide world-halves,
    they hymn (him) just as the seven streams do Indra. He "whetted down" Yudhyāmadhi at the moment of encounter.
25. You superior men, you Maruts, accompany this (man) here, like Divodāsa, the father of Sudās.
    Give aid to the aspiration of Paijavana—lordly power difficult to attain and unaging—(as he) seeks (your) favor.

VII.19 (535) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The first half of this hymn (vss. 1–5) celebrates various victories of Indra, giving aid both to men of the mythic past (e.g., Kutsa, vs. 2) and those of the present, especially King Sudās (vss. 3, also 6), the leader also in the Battle of the Ten Kings treated in the preceding, well-known hymn (VII.18). The allegiances and enmities of that hymn are strikingly different here: for example, Indra helps the Pūru king in this hymn (vs. 3), whereas in VII.18 the Pūrus are the enemy.

Beginning with verse 6 we attempt to mobilize the powers and protection that Indra has previously provided for us, and as usual we offer praise in return.

1. Who, like a fearsome sharp-horned bull, alone rouses forth all the communities;
   (you) who hold forth to the better (soma-)presser the patrimony and possessions of each and every impious man—
2. Just you, o Indra, helped Kutsa, while seeking fame for yourself with your own body in the clash,
   when for him you weakened the Dāsa Śuṣṇa bringing bad harvest, doing your best for Arjuna's offspring.
3. You, o bold one, boldly helped on Sudās, whose oblation is worth pursuing, with all forms of help;
   you helped on Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa, and Pūru in the winning of land, in the smashing of obstacles.
4. You—whose mind is inclined toward men in their pursuit of the gods—along with men you smash many obstacles, you of the fallow bays;
   you put to sleep the Dasyu Cumuri and Dhuni, easy to smash, for Dabhīti.
5. Yours are these exploits, you with the mace in hand—that nine and ninety fortifications at once
   along with the hundredth you worked to the end, in bringing them to rest [=collapse]. You smashed Vr̥tra, and moreover Namuci you smashed.
6. Win these delights of yours, Indra, for the pious Sudās, who has given an oblation.
   For you, the bull, I yoke the two bullish fallow bays. Let my sacred formulations pursue the prize, o you of many talents.
7. (Being) within this enclosure of yours here, may we not be (available) to be delivered to evil, o mighty possessor of the fallow bays.
   Protect us with defenses that keep the wolf away. May we be your dear ones, and dear to our patrons.

8. Dear indeed to you, o bounteous one, may we men rejoice in your charge, in your protection, as your comrades.
   Grind down Turvaśa, down Yādva, intending to do (a deed) worthy to be proclaimed for Atithigva.
9. Even now, all at once, o bounteous one, those in your charge, the men, the hymn-proclaimers, are proclaiming hymns,
   they who by their invocations of you have distanced the niggards through ritual service. Choose us for this same yoking [=ritual companionship].
10. These praises are for you, o most manly of men. Those granting bounties, inclined toward us—
   o Indra, become kindly disposed to them at the obstacle-smashing, as a champion who is both comrade and helper of men.
11. Now, o champion Indra, being praised by reason of your help, aroused by sacred formulations, become strengthened in your own body.
   Measure out prizes to us, measure out beings [=people]. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.20 (536) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins (vss. 1–2) by implicitly contrasting Indra's history, in the odd pādas, with his current activity in the even ones. It continues with praise especially of Indra's martial powers (vss. 3–5). Verse 5 takes up the theme of Indra's birth, found in the first pāda of the hymn, but it is not entirely clear who the father and mother are. In our opinion this is only a metaphorical reference to birth: Indra's vivification at the soma sacrifice, with the bull-father actually soma, referred to in the immediately preceding pāda (4d). The identification of the mother is more difficult in this interpretation: it could be a reference to the cow whose milk is mixed with soma. A non-ritual reading of the verse is also possible, with the father and mother the unnamed parents of Indra referred to elsewhere in the R̥gveda.

The second half of the hymn (vss. 6–10) describes the usual reciprocal relation between worshiper and god: anyone who gives the appropriate ritual devotion to Indra will be appropriately rewarded (see esp. vss. 6, 8). Yet the poet is not entirely sure Indra is doing his part, and in verse 7 he rather saucily (and even slangily) contrasts the proper patron–client behavior among humans with Indra's failure to come through. The poet also treats himself somewhat mockingly: in verse 9 he compares his praise first to a bellowing bull and then—in our view (the relevant word is a disputed hapax)—to another animal with a wailing or screeching cry, perhaps a monkey. But these light moments give way to the usual pleas for benefits at the end of the hymn.

1. He was born strong for heroic activity, autonomous—doing the work that a manly one will do.
   (Even as) a youth coming to the (ritual) session of men with his help— Indra is our rescuer from transgression, even if it is great.
2. The smasher of Vṛtra, Indra, swollen with strength—the hero has now aided the singer with help.
   The maker of wide space for Sudās [/the good giver], certainly that too!—in an instant he has become the giver of goods to the pious man.
3. An unassailable battler, creating tumult, combat-hardened—a champion, conquering entirely, unconquerable even at his birth—
   Indra of great strength dispersed the battle arrays; then he smashed everyone who played the rival.
4. You have filled even the two world-halves with your greatness, Indra, with your powers, powerful one.
   Indra of the fallow bays, holding fast to his mace, is accustomed to the exhilarating drinks along with the stalk.
5. The bull begat the bull for battle; that manly one did a woman bear.
   He who as leader of the army stands out from the (other) superior men, a powerful warrior, he is the daring seeker of cattle.
6. Never will that person be injured, nor be harmed, who seeks to win his [=Indra's] terrible mind.
   Whoever with sacrifices will place his friendship in Indra, he will rule over wealth as protector of truth, born in truth.
7. When, o Indra, a predecessor will be doing his best for his successor and a more important man will embark on giving to a lesser one,
   should the immortal be the only one sitting it out far away? Bright one, bring bright wealth here to us.
8. The person dear to you who will perform ritual service for you, he will be your comrade exclusively, o possessor of the stone.
   Most pleasing to you, may we be in this benevolence of yours, in your defense, in your protection for men, (so that) you will not smite (us).
9. This praise has bellowed (like) a bull to you, and (like) a thieving [?] (monkey?) has screeched, o bounteous one.
   Desire for wealth has come over your singer. You alone, powerful one, hold power over goods for us.
10. So, Indra, position us for the refreshment offered by you—and also position those bounteous ones who themselves incite (us).
    Let there be goodly skill for your singer. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.21 (537) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with two verses establishing the sacrificial context, the second of which describes the pressing stones as enthusiastic participants in the ritual. The remaining verses celebrate Indra's deeds and powers and beg him to display these powers for our benefit. Verses 3 and 4 treat previous deeds, verses 6–7 primarily his incomparable power.

The most striking verse is 5, the middle verse (vs. 10 being a refrain and thus extra-hymnic). Here various threats to the "truth" of our people are rendered helpless by our resistance and Indra's power: threats internal to the community, namely sorcerers and flatterers, and the "stranger" (an Ārya but an enemy), people who deviate from our ways, and phallus-worshipers (presumably non-Āryas) outside it.

The final two verses before the refrain (8–9) recognize Indra's help in the past and request it for the future.

1. It has been pressed—the divine stalk, foamy with cows [=milk]. Indra is accustomed to it even from birth.
   We take heed of you with sacrifices, you of the fallow bays. Take heed of our praise amid the exhilarating drinks from the stalk.
2. They go forth to the sacrifice, they make the ritual grass tremble—(the pressing stones) exhilarated on soma at the ceremony, possessing headstrong speech.
   The glorious ones are carried down from their handler—the bulls whose trampling (is heard) in the distance, the companions of the superior man [=Indra].
3. You, Indra, have made the waters flow, the many waters hemmed around by the serpent, o hero.
   The nourishing streams have twisted away from you like charioteers (maneuvering). All the finely made (fortifications) tremble with fear.
4. Fearsome, with their [=pressing stones'] weapons [=soma drinks] he toiled at all manly labors, the knowing one.
   Indra, bristling with excitement, shook apart the fortifications. With mace in hand, he smashed them apart with his greatness.
5. Sorcerers do not incite us, Indra, nor sycophants with their knowing wiles, o most powerful one.
   He [=Indra?] will vaunt himself over the stranger, over the race contrary (to our ways). Let the phallus-worshipers not penetrate our truth.
6. Be superior through your will, Indra, on the earth. The realms do not contain your greatness.
   Since with your own vast power you smashed Vṛtra, no rival will find the end (of it) in battle with you.

7. Even the gods, the ancient ones, measured their strengths (as inferior) to your lordship, your dominion.
   Indra, having conquered, distributes bounties. It is Indra whom (men) keep calling to in the winning of victory's prize.
8. For even the weakling has called upon you for help, o Indra, who have control over much good fortune.
   O you of a hundred forms of help, you have become a help to us, and you have become the defender of a man who, like you, distributes portions.
9. May we always be your comrades, Indra, increasing our homage because of your greatness, surpassing one.
   With your help in the encounter, may they combat the attack of the stranger, the powers of the rapacious ones.
10. So, Indra, position us for the refreshment offered by you—and also position those bounteous ones who themselves incite (us).
    Let there be goodly skill for your singer. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.22 (538) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
9 verses: virāj 1–8, triṣṭubh 9

The focus of this hymn is entirely ritual: Indra is invited to drink the soma and to listen to the hymns of the poet, Vasiṣṭha, who in the 1st person names himself in verse 3 and calls attention to his devotion in verses 5 and 7. He acknowledges that there are competing rituals designed for Indra (vss. 6–7) and also acknowledges that no ritual activities and no hymns of men can quite measure up to the worth of Indra (vss. 8–9). Indeed, in this case Vasiṣṭha's modesty seems justified: though the hymn is pleasingly phrased, it hardly counts as one of the pinnacles of R̥gvedic praise poetry.

1. Drink soma, Indra. Let it exhilarate you—(the soma) that the stone has pressed for you, you of the fallow bays,
   (the stone) like a steed well guided by the arms of the presser.
2. The dear exhilarating drink that exists to be yoked by you, with which you smash obstacles, you of the fallow bays,
   let that one exhilarate you, Indra of preeminent goods.
3. Take heed of this speech of mine, o bounteous one, which Vasiṣṭha chants to you as an encomium;
   enjoy these sacred formulations at the (time of) joint revelry.
4. Hear the call of the (pressing) stone as it drinks out (the sap); take heed of the inspired thought of the poet as he chants.

Make these gestures of friendship most intimately your own here (at the pressing).

5. I, a knowing (man), do not neglect the hymns for you, the surpassing one, nor the good praise of your lordship:
always I keep pronouncing your name, self-glorious one.
6. Since there are many pressings for you among the sons of Manu, many times does a man of inspired thought call on you alone.
Don't make a long delay at a distance from us, bounteous one.
7. For you alone are all these pressings, o champion; for you I make strengthening sacred formulations.
You are to be invoked by men at all times.
8. Never do they (quite) reach up to the greatness of you, o wondrous strong one, (so great as) you are considered to be—
nor to your heroism, Indra, nor to your generosity—
9. Neither the older seers nor the new ones, the inspired poets, who have created sacred formulations, Indra.
Let there be friendly fellowship of you for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.23 (539) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with Vasiṣṭha's self-address, exhorting himself to praise Indra, and it ends (vs. 6) with a verse summarizing the hymn, in which the plural Vasiṣṭhas chant to Indra. The first two verses seem to establish the context as a verbal contest between competing poets, although this context is not prominent in the rest of the hymn. The dominating theme is simply the soma sacrifice (soma drinks, vs. 5) and especially the accompanying verbal offerings (vss. 1–4). Praise of Indra's great deeds and powers is limited to a single pāda in the first verse (1c) and the second half of verse 3. Even this latter provides a transition to the ritual: 3d seems to refer to the Vr̥tra myth, and 4a might be taken as expressing the aftermath of the Vr̥tra-slaying, namely the release of the waters. But we consider its primary reference to be the waters used to swell the soma stalks before pressing; "swell" is regularly used of fertile, milking cows, but here the paradox is that the waters swell as if with milk although they are not themselves fertile.

Noteworthy is the second half of verse 2, a variant of the usual plea to the gods to extend our lifetime for a hundred years. Here we ask that we be carried across the various dangers to long life, though we do not know the lifetime we will have. Otherwise, Indra receives the standard requests to distribute wealth to us (vss. 4–6).

1. The sacred formulations have risen up, seeking fame. Magnify Indra at the encounter, o Vasiṣṭha.
   He who stretches over all with his vast power will hearken to the words of such as me.
2. The cry that is the gods' kinsman has been offered, Indra, as the rich spoils were put in order at the verbal contest.
   Because (the length of) their own lifetime is not perceptible to people, carry us across just these straits.
3. The sacred formulations have approached the one who has enjoyed (them), (for him) to yoke the cow-seeking chariot with his two fallow bays.
   This Indra thrust apart the two world-halves with his greatness, after he smashed the unopposable obstacles.
4. Even the waters swell, (though) barren like barren cows. The singers attain the truth [=a true hymn] for you.
   Drive to our teams [=hymns] like the Wind, for you distribute the prizes along with visionary thoughts.
5. Let these exhilarating drinks make you exhilarated, o Indra, the tempestuous one, powerfully generous to the singer,
   for alone among the gods you distribute to mortals. At this pressing, o champion, make yourself exhilarated.
6. In this way, just to Indra the bull with the mace in his arm do the Vasiṣṭhas chant with chants.
   Let him, praised, establish (wealth) consisting of men and of cows for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.24 (540) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Entirely an invitation to the sacrifice, this hymn conforms to the "journey" model, with repeated exhortations to Indra to "drive here," declarations that the sacrifice has been prepared, and, especially in the final verse (6), hopes for reciprocal benefits given by a satisfied Indra.

1. A womb has been made for you, Indra, on the seat (of the sacrifice). Drive forth to it along with your men, much-invoked one,
   so that you will be a helper for us and for our strengthening, and you will give goods and will reach exhilaration through the soma drinks.
2. Your doubly lofty mind has been captured, Indra; the soma has been pressed, the honeyed (drinks) poured.
   With the milk-streams released, the well-turned (hymn) is borne (forth)—this inspired thought constantly invoking Indra.

3. Drive here to us from heaven, here from earth, you of the silvery drink, to this ritual grass to drink the soma.
   Let the fallow bays convey you, the powerful one, turned toward me, to the song, to reach exhilaration.
4. Drive here to us, along with all your forms of help, o possessor of the fallow bays, taking pleasure in the sacred formulation,
   twisting and turning (on your route) with your stalwart (horses), you of good lips, providing to us your bullish impetuous force.
5. This praise is to convey the great, strong (Indra); it has been placed like a prize-seeking steed at the chariot-pole.
   Indra, this chant reverently invokes you for goods. Set your hearing in us (as you set) heaven upon heaven.
6. Just so, Indra, give to us of what is choice. May we continually procure your great benevolence.
   Swell nourishment rich in heroes for the bounteous ones [=patrons].
   – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.25 (541) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

King Sudās, the leader in the Battle of the Ten Kings (VII.18), appears here in verse 3, and the context is once again that of war and hostility. In sometimes vivid language we beg Indra to support our side in the conflict and to destroy our enemies.

1. (Be) here with your help, o great strong Indra, when armies equal in battle fury clash together
   and the missile in the arms of a manly one will fly. Let your mind not roam widely in other directions.
2. Indra, jab the foes down into a place of no exit—the mortals who plague us.
   Put the "laud" of the one intending scorn in the distance. Bring here to us an assemblage of goods.
3. Let there be a hundred forms of your help for Sudās, you of the (lovely) lips, a thousand your lauds and giving.
   Smash the weapon of the rapacious mortal. Set brilliance and treasure upon us.
4. Because I am within (the sphere of) the will of one like you, o Indra; within (the sphere of) the giving of a helper like you, o champion,
   for all your days, o powerful strong one, make a home for yourself (here), o you of the fallow bays. Do not neglect (us).

5. The Kutsas are those (who chant) a fortifying (hymn) to the one of the fallow bays, begging for the god-sped might in Indra.
   Make the obstacles utterly easy to smash, o champion. May we, victorious, win spoils.
6. Just so, Indra, give to us of what is choice. May we continually procure your great benevolence.
   Swell nourishment rich in heroes for the bounteous ones [=patrons].
   – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.26 (542) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This brief hymn displays several competing yet complementary types of structure. On the one hand, the first two verses respond to each other and establish pressed soma and hymns as the linked indispensible requisites of the sacrifice to Indra; the doubly negative formulation of the first half of verse 1 is especially striking. The last two verses (4–5) also respond to each other, each beginning with *evā́* "in just this way." These two pairs of verses highlight the excluded verse 3, the middle verse, as an omphalos, and this verse does contrast with the rest of the hymn in several ways. It is the only place where Indra's deeds are spoken of, and it also contains in its second half a striking simile (the only simile describing Indra in the hymn), in which the submission of fortresses to Indra is compared to the submission of cowives to their common husband. Thus verse 3 is in a sense a miniature example of proper praise-poetry, celebrating a god's mythic exploits in artful language.

A different structural feature pairs verse 1 with the final verse 5, in opposition to the three middle verses (2–4). In the first verse the speaker is "I"; in the last (vs. 5) it is Vasiṣṭha, who is doubtless identical with the "I" of verse 1. The middle verses instead have plural ritual participants: "those of equal skill" who call on Indra (vs. 2), ritual adepts (vs. 3), and the unidentified subject of "they speak" in verse 4. These middle verses may refer to the competing invocations of rival sacrificers, a subject that is something of a preoccupation of this set of Indra hymns (see, e.g., VII.22.6, 27.4, 28.1). The fear is always that they will attract Indra to their sacrifice rather than to that of the current speaker. The position of the Vasiṣṭha verses on both sides of these verses and enclosing them seems implicitly to assert that Vasiṣṭha's invocation has been successful. The parallelism of the last two verses, "just in this way [*evá*] they speak . . . " (vs. 4) and "just in this way [*evá*] Vasiṣṭha hymns . . . ," highlights this contrast.

The pleasing contrastive balance of both types of ring structures gives substance to the poet's boast in verse 1 that he is composing a "newer hymn that [Indra] will enjoy."

1. Soma, unpressed, does not exhilarate Indra, nor do pressings unaccompanied by sacred formulations (exhilarate) the bounteous one.
   For him I beget a hymn that he will enjoy, a newer manly one, so that he will listen to us.
2. Wherever there is a hymn, soma exhilarates Indra; whenever there is (ritual) conduct, the pressings (exhilarate) the bounteous one,
   when, like sons to their father, those of equal skill [=poets/sacrificers] call urgently upon him for help.
3. He did those (deeds)—he will now do others—which the ritual adepts proclaim at the pressings.
   As a single common husband does his wives, Indra has dragged down all the strongholds to submission.
4. Just in this way they speak of him. And Indra becomes famed as the single, surpassing apportioner of bounties,
   whose many forms of help compete for the lead. His dear auspicious things will be companions to us.
5. Just in this way at the pressing Vasiṣṭha hymns Indra, the bull of the communities, to help men.
   Mete out prizes to us in thousands. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.27 (543) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is much preoccupied with receiving material goods from Indra. The words "bounty," "bounteous," "largesse," and so forth are prominent. What would prompt his giving, namely our praise and sacrifice, is barely, but significantly, mentioned: the first verse opens with the martial context that is common throughout these Indra hymns in the VIIth Maṇḍala, with men in battle position. In our interpretation of pāda b, Indra is expected to harness the praise hymns directed to him by the poets of our side "to be decisive"—that is, the hymns will ensure that Indra will fight on our side and bring us victory. This concern to have Indra on our side in battle is echoed in verse 4 with the "coincident call." This call can refer both to warriors on opposing sides each calling Indra to fight on their own side, as in verse 1, and also to rival sacrificers each calling Indra to come to their sacrifice, as we have seen elsewhere in this Indra cycle.

Another important theme in the hymn is confinement, with subtle allusion to the Vala myth. We ask for a share of the cattle enclosure in 1d and in 2d exhort Indra to break apart the firmly closed fortresses and uncover what is enclosed there; the

swelling gift-cow in 4cd was previously enclosed (in our opinion; this adjective is ordinarily ascribed to a different root, and it can be a pun, with the second meaning "sought after"); and in the final verse (5) we ask Indra to make wide space for our wealth.

1. Indra do men call upon when facing the other side, so that he will hitch up these insights (of theirs) (to be) decisive.
   As champion at the winning of men, taking pleasure in your strength, give us a share in the enclosure containing cattle.
2. The unbridled power that is yours, bounteous Indra, (with it) do your best for your comrades, your men, o much invoked one.
   Because as one who can tell things apart you (take) apart the fastnesses, o bounteous one, (now) uncover largesse like something confined.
3. Indra is king of the moving world, of the settled domains, (and of) whatever of diverse form exists on the earth.
   From this he gives goods to the pious man; he impels largesse nearby, just when he is praised.
4. Never does bounteous Indra, because of (another) call coincident with ours, hold back from giving spoils along with help to us,
   he whose unfailing gift-cow swells, a thing of value for his men, his comrades, she who was (previously) enclosed.
5. Now, Indra, make wide space for our wealth. May we turn your mind here for bounty,
   as we pursue (wealth) in cows, horses, and chariots. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.28 (544) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Another hymn in this series concerned with competition between sacrificers. The first verse exhorts Indra to heed only our call, though others are calling, too, and in the second verse the phrase "penetrate through" seems to refer to Indra's ability to ignore the competitive calls in order to come to ours. The second half of verse 2 and verse 3 then turn to Indra's great deeds, but this section is connected to the first by a word play. Although it cannot be rendered easily in English, both the "vie in invoking" of verse 1 and the "penetrate through" in verse 2 contain the preverb *ví* "apart, through," which is in regular opposition to *sám* "together." In verse 3 it is said that Indra "united" the two world-halves, using a verb phrase including the preverb *sám* (literally "lead together"). But the cosmogonic deed that is regularly credited to Indra is rather the separation or pushing apart of the same two world-halves (for a nearby example see VII.23.3); we contend that here this underlying formula

is evoked by its opposite—the audience, familiar with the verbal formulae encapsulating Indra's great deeds, would understand "lead *together* [*sám*]" as "lead *apart* [*ví*]," primed by the *ví* forms found earlier in the hymn. For another example of an underlying formula appearing on the surface as its opposite, see Jamison (1982/83).

Verse 4 is notable because of the intrusion of Varuṇa into this Indra hymn, and Varuṇa in his role as observer and judge of the moral behavior of humans. Varuṇa is the tutelary deity of Vasiṣṭha (see the remarkable series of Varuṇa hymns, VII.86–89 below), but Varuṇa's presence is otherwise not found, or expected, in Indraic context. Since the last verse (5) is a refrain verse, in this Indra hymn Varuṇa has the last word, as it were. For Mitra and Varuṇa's parentage of Vasiṣṭha, see VII.33.10–14.

1. Drive up to our sacred formulations, Indra, as knowing one. Let your yoked fallow bays be turned our way,
   for although all mortals vie in invoking you, listen only to us, o all-impeller.
2. Your greatness, Indra, has penetrated through to our call, in that you protect the sacred formulations of the seers, o powerful one,
   when, o strong one, you have taken the mace in your hand. Being terrible by virtue of your will, you were born invincible—
3. When with your guidance you "united" the two world-halves, which were like men eagerly calling upon (you).
   Because he was born for great dominion, for power, the thruster pierced just the non-thruster.
4. Through these days, Indra, show favor to us, for the settled peoples who possess bad alliances are purifying themselves.
   When the sinless one [=Varuṇa] observes untruth, once again Varuṇa, master of artifice, (will) unloose us (from it).
5. We would proclaim him, just him: Indra the bounteous, so that he will give to us of the largesse of great wealth,
   he who best aids the preparation of the chanter's sacred formulation.
   – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.29 (545) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Although in many ways this is a straightforward invitation to soma, the hymn is also shot through with the anxiety about whether Indra will choose *our* sacrifice that is characteristic of other hymns in this Indra cycle. The first two verses are simple collections of the clichés of the journey/invitation hymn genre, but in verse 3

the poet worries about the best means of ritual service and in verse 4 reminds Indra that earlier poets were no different from us.

1. This soma here is pressed for you, Indra. Drive here toward (it), you of the fallow bays, since you are at home with it.
   Drink of this pleasing well-pressed (soma). You will give bounties, bounteous one, when you are implored.
2. Formulator, hero, taking pleasure in the preparation of the sacred formulation, drive swiftly close by here with your fallow bays.
   At just this pressing here reach exhilaration. You will listen to these sacred formulations of ours.
3. What is the proper way to prepare for you with hymns? When now might we do ritual service for you, bounteous one?
   I will stretch out all my thoughts, seeking you. So now will you listen to these invocations of mine?
4. They too were just men—those earlier seers you listened to.
   So now it is I who eagerly invoke you, bounteous one. You, Indra, are solicitude for us, like a father.
5. We would proclaim him, just him: Indra the bounteous, so that he will give to us of the largesse of great wealth,
   he who best aids the preparation of the chanter's sacred formulation. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.30 (546) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Again this hymn expresses a martial and competitive spirit, especially in verse 2. Also, as in VII.28, another god is introduced into an Indra hymn, this time Agni (vs. 3), rather than Varuṇa (VII.28.4). The combination of Agni and the dawns suggests a dawn sacrifice, and the praise of patrons in verse 4 must refer to the distribution of the dakṣiṇā or priestly gift by patrons to priests and poets at that ceremony.

1. Drive here to us, o god, with your vast power, tempestuous one. As increaser of this wealth, Indra, be there (for us)
   for great manliness, o lord of men, possessing a good mace—for great dominion, for masculine power, o champion.
2. The champions invoke you who are to be invoked at the verbal contest, at (the contest) for their own persons, at the winning of the sun.
   You are the martial one among all peoples. You—weaken the obstacles for easy smashing.
3. So that the days will dawn forth day-bright, so that you will establish your utmost beacon in the combats, Indra,

Agni has sat down as Hotar, like a lord, calling the gods here for the one of good portion.

4. We are yours, god Indra, and so are those who are praised as giving bounties [=patrons], o champion.
   To our patrons grant utmost defense: being there (for us), they shall reach old age.
5. We would proclaim him, just him: Indra the bounteous, so that he will give to us of the largesse of great wealth,
   he who best aids the preparation of the chanter's sacred formulation.
   – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.31 (547) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
12 verses: gāyatrī 1–9, virāj 10–12, arranged in tr̥cas.

This twelve-verse hymn is organized into tr̥cas, the first three (1–9) in dimeter meter, the last in trimeter, but the hymn seems conceived as a unity. It begins with the poet's address to his priestly comrades (vs. 1), followed by his self-address (vs. 2a), and the joint production of his comrades and himself is referred to in the 1st plural in 2bc. The last tr̥ca likewise begins with an address to the priests by the poet (vs. 10). At regular intervals throughout the hymn the poet and his fellow celebrants are compared to the Maruts, who likewise hymned Indra (vss. 2, 8, 12).

The praise of Indra and the benefits we request of him are generic, but nicely balanced.

1. Sing forth your exhilarating (song) to Indra of the fallow bays,
   to the soma-drinker, o comrades.
2. (You yourself, o poet—) recite solemn speech to him of good gifts. And thus, like the superior men [=Maruts],
   we have made a heavenly (speech) for him whose generosity is real.
3. You, Indra, are seeking spoils for us; you are seeking cows, o you of a hundred resolves;
   you are seeking gold, o good one.

4. We are seeking you, o Indra; we keep bellowing out to you, o bull.
   Know this (cry?) of ours, o good one.
5. Do not make us subject to scorn to be spoken or to the hostility of the stranger.
   On you is my determination (fixed).
6. You are armor of broad extent and a fighter in the front, o Vr̥tra-smasher.
   With you as yokemate, I respond to (the challenger).

7. And you are great, you to whose might the two autonomous world-halves
   have yielded, o Indra.

8. The choir of Maruts, your fellow travelers, surrounds you,
reaching you all together throughout the days.
9. The (soma) drops aloft in heaven come close to you, the wondrous one;
the communities jointly bow to you.

10. (Sacrificers,) bear forth your (offering) for the great one of great
strengthening; for the forethoughtful one put forth your good thought.
(Indra,) fare forth to the many clans, as the one filling up the settled
domains.
11. For the great one of broad expanse, for Indra, the inspired poets begat
a (hymn) with a good twist, a sacred formulation.
His commandments the clever do not transgress.
12. The (Marut) choirs entirely established Indra—just him to whom the
battle fury is conceded—as king, to be victorious.
Swell his friends altogether for the one of the fallow bays.

VII.32 (548) Indra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–25), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26ab), Vasiṣṭha or Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26cd–27)
27 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, except dvipadā virāj 3, arranged in pragāthas

This final hymn in the VIIth Maṇḍala Indra cycle is a loose collection of pragāthas, the first of which has a two-pāda extension (vs. 3). Even within the verse pairs there is little cohesion. But there is a unifying theme that runs throughout: Indra's generous giving and our grateful receiving, to an extent unusual even in an Indra hymn. Moreover, it is not only Indra's giving that we seek: it is repeatedly emphasized that Indra helps and gives to mortals who themselves give, that is, the patrons of the sacrifice (see, e.g., vss. 7, 8, 10, 15).

The hymn opens (vs. 1) with the preoccupation that has been visible in many Indra hymns in VII, the fear that rival sacrificers may attract Indra to their own rituals, and Indra's epithet "invoked by many" appears several times (vss. 17, 20, 26). Much of the hymn is concerned with defining the type of ritual behavior that will cause Indra to choose one sacrifice over another.

Indra is supreme in this hymn. In its twenty-seven verses there is only one mention of another divinity, the Maruts in verse 10.

1. Let not (any other) cantors at all stop you at a distance from us.
Even from afar come here to our joint revelry, or being (already) here
hearken (to us),
2. Because these who craft sacred formulations for you sit like flies on
honey when (the soma) is pressed.

The singers, seeking goods, set their desire on Indra, like a foot on a chariot.

3. Desirous of wealth I call upon the one with mace in hand, possessing a good right (hand/horse) [/bringing good priestly gifts], like a son upon his father.

4. These soma drinks here, mixed with curds, have been pressed for Indra.
Drive to them with your pair of fallow bays, o you with mace in hand—for exhilaration, for drinking—(as if) to your home.

5. He will listen: he of listening ears is implored for goods. He will never neglect our songs.
The one who just in a single day will give hundreds, thousands—no one will confound him when he is about to give.

6. That hero cannot be repulsed—he becomes puffed up by Indra, along with his men—
who presses and rinses deep pressings for you, o Vr̥tra-smasher.

7. Be a defense for the bounteous (patrons), bounteous one, when you will herd together those who vaunt themselves.
Might we have a share in the possessions of the one slain by you. Bring here the patrimony of the one difficult to get at.

8. Press soma for soma-drinking Indra who holds the mace.
Cook cooked dishes. Just cause (him) to help. It is only the generous giver who is a joy to the one who generously gives.

9. You pressers of soma, do not fail; be skillful for the great one. Make (him inclined) to thrust wealth (to us).
It is just the surpassing man who wins: he dwells peacefully, he thrives. The gods are not for the petty.

10. No one has encircled the chariot of Sudās [/the good giver], nor stopped it.
Whoever has Indra as helper, whoever has the Maruts, he will come to a pen full of cattle.

11. He will come to the prize when he strives for the prize—the mortal whose helper you will be, Indra.
Become a helper to *our* chariots, o champion, to *our* men.

12. His share now is outstanding like the spoils of a victor.
Indra of the fallow bays—cheats do not outwit him. He places skill in the one who has soma.

13. A mantra—not stunted, well arranged, well adorned—set it among those worthy of the sacrifice.
The many onslaughts never overcome him who through ritual work comes to be in (the good grace) of Indra.

14. What mortal will dare against him who has you as his possession, Indra?
 It is with trust in you, bounteous one, that on the decisive day the one vying for the prize seeks to win the prize.
15. At the smashing of obstacles spur on the bounteous ones who give their own dear goods.
 O you of the fallow bays, with your guidance may we, along with our patrons, overcome all difficulties.

16. Yours alone is the lowest good thing, Indra; you prosper the middling one.
 You rule over each highest one entirely. No one obstructs you when cattle (are at stake).
17. You are famed as the giver of spoils to everyone, whenever there are (battle-)drives.
 Every earth-dweller here, when seeking help, desires a share in your name, o you who are invoked by many.

18. If I were lord of as much as you are, Indra,
 I would seek to make just my praiser (well) set up, you excavator of goods; I would not give him over to ill-estate.
19. I would do my best just for the one who magnifies (the god) every day, to (bring him) wealth here wherever it is to be found,
 for there exists no other, better friendship for us than you, nor even a father, bounteous one.

20. It is just the surpassing one who seeks to win the prize, as yokemate with Plenitude.
 I bend Indra, invoked by many, here to you with a song, as a carpenter bends a felly made of good wood.
21. Not by a bad(ly made) praise does a mortal find goods, nor will wealth reach the one who fails.
 It's an easy skill for you, bounteous one—giving to the likes of me on the decisive day.

22. We keep bellowing to you, o champion, like unmilked cows—
 to you, Indra, who see (like) the sun, lord of this moving (world), lord of the still one.
23. There is no other heavenly one like you, nor earthly; neither born, nor to be born.
 Seeking horses, seeking cows, vying for the prize, we call upon you, bounteous Indra.

24. Bring this greater (good) here, Indra, to those who are lesser,
 for you, bounteous one, are from of old one with many goods, and the one to be called upon at every raid.

25. Thrust away the foes, bounteous one; make goods easy for us to find.
 Become a helper for us in (the contest for) great stakes; become a strengthener of our comrades.

26. Indra, bring your resolve to bear for us, like a father for his sons.
 Do your best for us on this drive, you who are invoked by many. May we, (still) alive, reach the light.

27. Let not communities unknown—ill-intentioned and unkindly disposed—trample us down.
 With you, o champion, let us cross over the (river-)courses one after another, cross over the waters.

VII.33 (549) Vasiṣṭha's Sons (1–9); Vasiṣṭha (10–14)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–9), Vasiṣṭha's sons (10–14)
14 verses: triṣṭubh

This famous hymn, coming at the very end of the Vasiṣṭha Indra cycle, treats the mystical birth of Vasiṣṭha and the accomplishments of Vasiṣṭha and his descendants, particularly the feat of attracting Indra to the side of King Sudās and ensuring Indra's support in the Battle of the Ten Kings, the battle treated at length in VII.18. The Anukramaṇī identifies the poet of verses 1–9 as Vasiṣṭha and the "deity" as Vasiṣṭha's sons, with the opposite identifications for verses 10–14, but this does not seem the most perspicuous assignment of roles. Rather, it seems that the hymn falls into three parts: 1–6, 7–9, 10–14, starting with a time close to the (semi-mythical) present and moving backward to the deep mythical past.

The first six verses celebrate the Vasiṣṭhas' successful invitation of Indra to their soma sacrifice and Indra's subsequent aid to Sudās and the Tr̥tsus in the Ten Kings battle. Indra himself appears to be the speaker in verses 1 and 4. The first two verses depict one of the themes running through this set of Indra hymns: competing sacrifices. Here, Indra seems actually to rise from his seat at another sacrifice to go to the Vasiṣṭhas in verse 1, with his journey described in verse 2. Verses 3–6 treat his aid to Sudās in the Ten Kings battle, with all credit given to the Vasiṣṭhas' poetic skill for bringing this aid (vss. 3–5), and Indra himself declaring this in verse 4.

The next section begins with a trio of riddles based on the number three (vs. 7), with the last pāda of that verse asserting that it is exactly this knowledge that the Vasiṣṭhas control—a nice meta-comment on what Vedic poets were supposed to know. There is no consensus (modern or ancient) on the answers to these three riddles. The three producers of semen may be the three soma-pressings, or heaven (with its rain), soma, and man—and other answers have also been suggested. The three Ārya "creatures" with light in front could be the three ritual fires, or the fire, the sun, and dawn—and, again, there are other possible solutions. As for the three "heats," these could again be the ritual fires, or the sun, the fire, and the gharma

drink, or some other triad. It is perhaps pleasing that the Vasiṣṭhas' esoteric knowledge has remained safe with them for over three millennia! This skill of theirs at decoding secrets and putting them in proper verbal form is celebrated further in verse 8 and the first half of verse 9.

The second half of verse 9 provides the transition to the last section, concerning the birth of Vasiṣṭha. What the Vasiṣṭhas are weaving (a motif recurring almost verbatim in vs. 12) is not entirely clear, but we are inclined to think it concerns the institution and performance of the sacrifice. It *is* clear why they are approaching the Apsarases (the heavenly "nymphs" of Vedic and later Indian culture): one of the Apsarases' number, Urvaśī, is their mother (see vss. 11–12), with Mitra and Varuṇa as their father (see vss. 11, 13), in the first of their forefather Vasiṣṭha's births. Both births are referred to in verse 10, both that from Mitra and Varuṇa and that when Agastya presented him to the clan. To say that the details of the births are murky is an understatement, and we will not attempt here to interpret all the mysteries in these verses. The last verse (14) is traditionally taken as Agastya's words, introducing Vasiṣṭha to his adoptive clan, the Tr̥tsus, and outlining Vasiṣṭha's ritual role. The address to "you thrusters forth" (*pratr̥daḥ*) is most likely a pun on their name.

1. [Indra:] They, bright-faced, with their braids on the right side, quickening thought—because they exhilarated me,
   I, standing up from the ritual grass, speak about the superior men: "They cannot be helped by me from a distance—the Vasiṣṭhas."
2. From a distance they led Indra here with pressed (soma)—across a lake's worth (of soma), on beyond the powerful drink.
   Over the pressed soma of Pāśadyumna Vāyata he preferred the Vasiṣṭhas.
3. It was certainly just with them that he crossed the Sindhu; certainly just with them that he smashed Bheda [/the "Splitter"];
   it was certainly just by reason of your sacred formulation that Indra helped Sudās in the Battle of the Ten Kings, o Vasiṣṭhas.
4. [Indra:] Gladly, you superior men, by reason of your fathers' sacred formulation, I have engirded the axle: you will certainly not be harmed,
   since with a lofty cry in Śakvarī [=martial] (meter) you established impetuous force in Indra, o Vasiṣṭhas.
5. Like thirsty ones looking toward heaven (for rain), in distress they looked toward (Indra) when they were surrounded in the Battle of the Ten Kings.
   Indra hearkened to Vasiṣṭha as he was praising; he made the broad space broad for the Tr̥tsus.
6. They were cut off short, like goads for driving cattle—the puny Bharatas.
   When Vasiṣṭha came to be the leader, right after that did the clans of the Tr̥tsus spread out.

7. Three produce semen in the world; three creatures belonging to the Ārya have light in front.
   Three heats accompany the dawn. All these (triads) do they know through and through—the Vasiṣṭhas.
8. Their light is like the waxing of the sun; their greatness is deep as the sea's;
   like the speed of the wind, your praise hymn, o Vasiṣṭhas, can be pursued by no other.
9. Only they converge upon the thousand-twigged secret with the insights of their heart.
   Weaving the covering (garment) stretched by Yama, they reverently approached the Apsarases—the Vasiṣṭhas.
10. When Mitra and Varuṇa saw you as light compacting itself from out of the lightning—
    that was (one) birth of yours, Vasiṣṭha, and (there was) one when Agastya brought you here for the clan.
11. And you are the descendant of Mitra and Varuṇa, o Vasiṣṭha, born from Urvaśī, from her mind, you formulator.
    A drop (of semen?) spurted forth: with a heavenly formulation all the gods took you in a lotus.
12. He, foreknowing of both in his insight, possessing a thousand gifts and one gift (more),
    intending to weave the covering stretched by Yama, was born from the Apsaras—Vasiṣṭha.
13. The two [=Mitra and Varuṇa?], brought into being at a (ritual) Session, aroused by reverences, poured their common semen into a pot.
    From it arose Māna from the middle. From it they say the seer was born—Vasiṣṭha.
14. [Agastya?:] He supports the supporter of solemn speech [=Hotar], the supporter of the melody [=Udgātar]; supporting the pressing stone he will speak forth at the beginning.
    Do you reverently approach him, seeking benevolence. He will come to you, you thrusters forth—Vasiṣṭha.

VII.34 (550) All Gods (except Ahi 16, Ahi Budhnya 17a)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
25 verses: dvipadā 1–21, triṣṭubh 22–25

This loosely structured hymn intersperses verses relating to the sacrifice, especially its poetic portion (e.g., vss. 1, 4–5, 8–9), with verses dedicated to particular gods.

In the early parts of the hymn, the verses to gods are structured as riddles, and the god is not named: Indra in verse 3, Savitar in verse 4, Agni (?) in verse 7. But in later parts of the hymn the gods and divine forces are identified, starting with Varuṇa in verses 10–11. Minor gods predominate in this section (e.g., Ahi Budhnya, the Serpent of the Deep, vss. 16–17), through verse 23. There are also several interludes requesting help against hostility and bodily harm (vss. 12–13, 18–19). The final two verses call on many of the major gods of the pantheon, without distinguishing characteristics.

There is a distinct watery theme running throughout the hymn, beginning with the waters themselves (vss. 2–3). When Varuṇa is mentioned (vss. 10–11), it is in his association with waters, a mostly later quality of Varuṇa's. The Child of the Waters (Apām Napāt, vs. 15) and the "water-born" Serpent of the Deep (vss. 16–17) contribute to this aqueous environment, and the waters themselves reappear in verse 23. The reason for this emphasis on water is not clear.

1. Let the gleaming divine inspired thought go forth from us,
   well-fashioned like a prizewinning chariot.
2. They know the means of begetting of earth and of heaven;
   the waters listen then, even as they flow.
3. The broad waters swell just for him;
   they will be considered as powerful champions in the (battles against)
   obstacles.
4. Put the horses to the chariot-poles for him.
   Golden-armed, he carries the mace like Indra.
5. Set out on the sacrifice as if through the days.
   Like a (chariot-)driver in flight, spur it on by yourself.
6. By yourself spur on the sacrifice at the combats.
   Establish it as a beacon, a hero for the people.
7. From its tempestuous force it has arisen like a radiant beam.
   It bears its burden, like the earth its ground.
8. I invoke the gods without sorcery, o Agni.
   Assuring its success through truth, I produce my insight.
9. Harness your divine insight.
   Put your speech forward among the gods.
10. He inspects the haven of these (waters), of the rivers—
    powerful Varuṇa of a thousand eyes.
11. King of kingdoms, ornament of the rivers:
    lifelong lordship has been conceded to him.
12. Aid us amid all the clans;
    render harmless the "laud" of him who wishes to scorn.
13. Let the unfriendly missile of the haters go wide.
    Keep the infirmity of bodies away, off to the side.
14. Agni, the oblation-eater, has aided us with our acts of reverence.
    The dearest praise has been produced for him.

15. Along with the gods, make the Child of the Waters your companion.
    Let him be friendly to us.
16. I will sing to the water-born serpent with hymns:
    he is sitting in the depth of the rivers, in the dusky realms.
17. Let Ahi Budhnya [/the Serpent of the Deep] not set us up for harm;
    let the sacrifice of him who seeks the truth not fail.
18. And they have placed fame upon these men of ours.
    Let them [=men] go forth for wealth, vaunting themselves over the stranger.
19. They scorch the rival, like the sun the worlds—
    those possessing great weapons with their onslaughts.
20. When the Wives (of the Gods) will come to us,
    let Tvaṣṭar of the lovely hands confer heroes (on us).
21. Might Tvaṣṭar enjoy our praise.
    Might Aramati [/Devotion], seeking goods, be in us.
22. The Gift-Escorts will give goods to us. Let Rodasī, let Varuṇāṇī pay heed.
    Let him be one affording good shelter (along?) with the Shielding Goddesses; let generously giving Tvaṣṭar apportion wealth.
23. Then let the mountains (apportion) us wealth, then let the waters, then the Gift-Escorts, the plants, and Heaven,
    and Earth jointly with the trees. The two world-halves will protect us all around.
24. Then let the two broad world-halves follow suit, let heaven-ruling Varuṇa, whose comrade is Indra, follow;
    let all the Maruts, who are victorious, follow. Might we be (fit) to found the buttress of wealth.
25. Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, the waters, the plants, the trees shall enjoy this of ours.
    Might we be in the shelter, in the lap of the Maruts. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.35 (551) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This fifteen-verse hymn is in competition for the most boring hymn in the R̥gveda (a competition in which there are remarkably few entries). In the first thirteen verses every pāda begins with the indeclinable word *śám* "luck, weal" in the hardly varying formula "luck for us be X," with X a god or gods, power, or sacrificial element. There is generally a rationale for the groupings found in each

verse, though it not always transparent (see, e.g., vs. 3). The final two verses (14–15) inclusively beg all the gods in various groupings to enjoy the praise and grant space to us.

1. Luck for us be Indra and Agni with their help; luck for us Indra and Varuṇa, on whom oblations are bestowed.
   Luck Indra and Soma—luck and lifetime for good faring; luck for us Indra and Pūṣan at the winning of prizes.
2. Luck for us Fortune, and luck for us be Laud. Luck for us Plenitude and luck be Riches.
   Luck for us the Laud of what is real and easy to guide; luck for us be Aryaman, born many times.
3. Luck for us the Establisher and luck be the Upholder for us. Luck for us be the Wide-Spreading (Earth?) with her own powers.
   Luck be the lofty World-Halves, luck for us the Stone; luck let the easily called (names) of the gods be for us.
4. Luck for us be Agni, whose face is light; luck for us Mitra and Varuṇa, the Aśvins luck.
   Luck for us be the good deeds of the good doers; luck let the vigorous Wind blow to us.
5. Luck for us Heaven and Earth at the Early Invocation; luck be the Midspace for us to see.
   Luck for us be the plants, the trees; luck be the victorious lord of the dusky realm.
6. Luck for us be god Indra along with the Vasus; luck Varuṇa of good laud along with the Ādityas;
   luck for us healing Rudra along with the Rudras [=Maruts]; for luck let Tvaṣṭar along with the Wives hear us here.
7. Luck for us be Soma; the Sacred Formulation luck for us; luck for us be the Pressing Stones and luck the Sacrifices.
   Luck for us be the Fixing of the Posts; luck for us be the Fruitful (plants) and the Altar.
8. For luck for us let the Sun of broad gaze go up; luck for us be the four Directions.
   Luck for us be the steadfast Mountains. Luck for us the Rivers and luck be the Waters.
9. Luck for us be Aditi with her commandments; luck for us be the Maruts of good chant.
   Luck for us Viṣṇu and luck be Pūṣan; luck for us (the means of) Creation and luck be the Wind.
10. Luck for us god Savitar who gives protection; luck for us be the widely radiant Dawns.
    Luck be Parjanya for us and for our offspring; luck for us be the Lord of the Dwelling Place, who is Luck itself.

11. Luck for us be the Gods, the All Gods; luck be Sarasvatī along with her insights.
    Luck the Escorts and luck the Gift-Escorts; luck for us the Heavenly ones, the Earthly ones, luck for us the Watery ones.
12. Luck for us be the masters of the real; luck for us the steeds, and luck be the cows.
    Luck for us the R̥bhus of good action and good hands; luck for us be the Fathers at the invocations.
13. Luck for us be god Aja Ekapad; luck for us Ahi Budhnya [/Serpent of the Deep], luck the Sea.
    Luck for us be the swelling Child of the Waters; luck for us be Pr̥śni, who has the gods as her protectors.
14. The Ādityas, the Rudras, the Vasus enjoy this sacred formulation being made here anew.
    Let them hear us—the Heavenly ones, the Earthly ones, the Cow-Born ones, and those who are worthy of the sacrifice.
15. Those who are the sacrificial ones of the sacrificial gods, the occasion of sacrifice for Manu, immortal, knowing the truth,
    let them grant us wide-ranging space today. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.36 (552) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
9 verses: triṣṭubh

Like many All God hymns, this one allots a verse each to a god or group of gods, most named, some not named but obvious from their description, and a few less transparently characterized. The verses whose divinities are clear are 1: Sun; 2: Mitra and Varuṇa; 5: Rudra, 6: Rivers, 7: Maruts (and their mother Pr̥śni?); 8: Aramati, Pūṣan, and Bhaga; 9: Maruts and Viṣṇu. For verse 3 some scholars identify the Wind and Parjanya [Thunder] as the dedicands, but we assign it instead to Soma; verse 4 may belong to both Indra and Aryaman, but we consider *aryamán* here to be used as a descriptor of Indra, rather than as the name of the third member of the Ādityan triad, since the other descriptors—strong resolution and confounding of the enemy's battle fury—are characteristic of Indra.

The hymn can also be read as a chronological progress through a sacrifice. In verse 1 the fire is kindled at dawn and ritual speech is uttered on the ritual ground. The hymn is mentioned in verse 2, and the preparation of soma in verse 3. The invitation to Indra to come to the sacrifice with his horses is given in verse 4, and the actual sacrifice occurs in verse 5. Although the verse to the rivers (6) does not appear to fit this pattern, it could refer to the waters used to swell the soma stalks

(see also vs. 3) or to other ritual uses of water. The final three verses (7–9) call upon the various gods for wealth and progeny.

1. Let the sacred formulation go forth from the seat of truth. The Sun with his rays has dispatched the cows outward.
   The broad Earth has stretched out on her back. Agni has been kindled on her wide face.
2. This well-twisted (hymn) here do I make anew, like a refreshing drink, for you two, lordly Mitra and Varuṇa.
   One of you two, the strong one, is an undeceivable tracer of the track, and (the other), Mitra, arranges the people in their place when called upon.
3. The movements of the swooping wind come to rest. The sweet (stalks?) have swelled like milk-cows.
   Being born in the seat of great heaven, the bull has roared in the self-same udder.
4. Whoever will yoke with a hymn these two fallow bays of yours, o champion Indra, the two dear ones, good at the chariot, seeking fodder,
   I (as that person) would turn hither the very resolute god of custom [/Aryaman, here = Indra] who confounds the battle fury of the one who wishes to do harm.
5. The reverent ones worship his fellowship and vitality on the domain of truth itself.
   He has thrust outward the fortifying nourishments when being praised by men. This reverence is dearest to Rudra.
6. When the glorious ones are bellowing simultaneously—(the other rivers and) Sarasvatī, whose mother is the Sindhu, as seventh—
   who are richly fertile, rich in milk, rich in streams, they (come) toward (us), swelling with their own milk.
7. And these Maruts, exulting—let the prizewinners aid our insight and progeny.
   Let not the imperishable (cow? [=Pr̥śni?]) overlook us as she roams. They have increased wealth to be harnessed for us.
8. Set in front of yourselves great Devotion [/Aramati], in front Pūṣan, like a hero deserving of the ceremonial distribution;
   and Bhaga, who aids this insight of ours, and the prize at its winning, and Plenitude the Gift-Escort.
9. Let this signal-call of ours go to you, o Maruts, to Viṣṇu, who protects the poured out (semen) with his help.
   And let them establish vitality for the singer to produce progeny. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.37 (553) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Although this hymn is technically dedicated to the All Gods, it is only the R̥bhus and Indra who feature in the hymn proper (R̥bhus esp. vss. 1–2, Indra vss. 3–7), with Savitar addressed in the final verse (8). The association of Indra with the R̥bhus identifies the ritual moment as the Third Pressing, which they share, and since Savitar is often associated with the evening, his presence is also appropriate.

The first four verses concern the sacrifice: the gods come, drink together, and give gifts to the sacrificer and his patrons. In verse 4 Indra is sent home with a final chorus. The next verses change the scene. In verses 5–6 Indra is praised for his help in winning more territory for us, but he seems to be withholding the wealth we expect. The most puzzling verse is 7, which has elicited various interpretations. In our opinion, the "triple kin-bonds" refers to the three-generation model, in which a man is situated conceptually between his father and his sons; this man is threatened by dissolution and premature death, not only of himself but also of his sons, and he approaches Indra for aid, since Indra himself successfully attains old age (an interesting conceit for a "deathless" or "immortal" god). But this interpretation remains uncertain and speculative. The first pāda of the final verse (8) forms a ring with the first pāda of the hymn, and the topic returns to the gifts we expect and hope for.

1. Let the chariot, the best conveyor, convey you here to be praised, o Vājas, R̥bhukṣans—(a chariot) indestructible.
   Fill yourselves to exhilaration with great triple-backed soma drinks at the pressings, you lovely-lipped ones.
2. You confer a treasure on the bounteous (patrons), you R̥bhukṣans of sunlike sight—(a treasure) indestructible.
   Drink together at the sacrifices, autonomous ones. Apportion rewards to us in accordance with our thoughts.
3. Because you, bounteous one, are accustomed to giving at the distribution of goods great and small,
   both your fists are filled with goods. No (one) will hold back your liberalities, your masses of goods.
4. You, Indra, are the self-glorious R̥bhukṣan. Like a prize reaching its goal, you go home accompanied by verses.
   May we Vasiṣṭhas now be your pious servers, you of the fallow bays, as we prepare the sacred formulation.
5. You regularly gain the (river-)courses just for your pious server, along which you will accomplish your work in accord with your visions, you of the fallow bays.
   We have now won by your help allied (to us). When, Indra, would you show the favor of your wealth to us?

6. You seem to be causing us, your ritual adepts, to bide our time. When will you take notice of our speech, Indra?
   In accord with a papa's vision the fortifying prizewinning steed should carry home to us wealth rich in heroes.
7. Even (a man) toward whom the goddess Disorder extends her dominion—(because) the autumns rich in fortifying nourishment reach Indra,
   that man of triple kin-bonds draws near to him [=Indra, who is] one who reaches old age—(even a man) whom (other) mortals would render bereft of his own clansmen.
8. Let rewards come here to us to be praised, o Savitar; let the riches of the mountain come here at (the time for) giving.
   Always let the heavenly protector accompany us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.38 (554) Savitar, except Savitar or Bhaga (6cd), Prizewinning Horses (7–8)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns most of this hymn to Savitar, with possibly a half-verse to Bhaga and the final two verses to the Vājins (prizewinning horses), it seems more likely to have been an All God hymn in original conception. It is found in the middle of the All God hymns of the VIIth Maṇḍala in proper sequence as to meter and number of verses, and, in addition to Savitar, mentions a number of divinities, including several minor ones found also in the surrounding All God hymns: see especially verse 5 with the Gift-Escorts (also VII.34.22, 23; 35.11; 40.6), Ahi Budhnya (the Serpent of the Deep; also VII.34.17; 35.13), and the Shielding Goddess(es); also VII.34.22; 40.6). The mysterious Ekadhenus (literally, "having a single milk-cow") are found only here. It is not unusual in an All God hymn for a single god to predominate and others to be mentioned only in passing; compare nearby VII.37 with its primary focus on Indra and the R̥bhus.

Savitar's role is most prominent in the first two verses, where, as usual, he stands up and raises his emblem, demonstrating his power to impel and compel. The group of gods known as Vasus praises him in verse 3; Aditi and the Ādityas greet him in verse 4; and, as already mentioned, several minor divinities are found in verse 5. As often, the god Bhaga ("Fortune") is invoked along with Savitar (vss. 1 and 6) as the distributor of goods, which we seek. The last two verses (7–8) concern the "prize-winners" (*vājín*). This word is frequently a descriptor of horses in competition, and a number of scholars consider the reference here to be actual horses in the human realm. However, the sacrificial context in these two verses is strong, and on the basis

of phraseological parallels we consider the referents to be the Maruts (who are called prizewinners in VII.36.7, while the phrase "let the Maruts *of good chant* be luck for us" is found in VII.35.9).

1. This god Savitar holds up the golden emblem which he has fixed firm.
   Now is Bhaga to be invoked by the sons of Manu—he of many goods who distributes treasures.
2. Stand up, Savitar. Listen, o golden-palmed one, at the (ritual) presentation of this truth,
   unloosing your emblem wide and broad, impelling mortals' sustenance here for men.
3. Let god Savitar, when praised, be nearby, whom also all the Vasus hymn.
   Let him, worthy of reverence, take delight in our praises. Let him protect the patrons with all his protectors.
4. Whom goddess Aditi greets, taking pleasure in the impulsion of god Savitar,
   (him) do the sovereign kings Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and their allies greet in concert—
5. (As do) those who, zealous in rivalry, serve the gift of Heaven and Earth as Gift-Escorts.
   And let Ahi Budhnya hear us; let the Shielding Goddess defend (us) with the Ekadhenus.
6. Might the Lord of the Family [=Bhaga] concede this treasure of god Savitar's to us, when he is begged for it.
   Bhaga does the powerful one keep calling for help, and Bhaga does the powerless one beg for a treasure.
7. Let these prizewinners [=Maruts]—those of measured pace and lovely chants—be luck for us at the invocations in the divine assembly.
   Crushing the serpent, the wolf, the demonic powers, they will keep afflictions away from us, bag and baggage.
8. Help us to every prize, o prizewinners, when the stakes (are set), you truth-knowing, immortal inspired poets.
   Drink of this honey here; make yourselves exhilarated. Satisfied, drive along the paths that lead to the gods.

VII.39 (555) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The organizing principle of this hymn is the ritual fire (Agni) and the dawn sacrifice over which he presides. In verse 1 the sacrifice is set in motion; the gods begin

to assemble at dawn at the sacrificial ground (vss. 2–3), and Agni is exhorted to perform the sacrifice (vs. 4) and to bring the various gods to it (vs. 5). The poet declares his own contribution to the sacrifice and asks Agni for the appropriate rewards (vs. 6). The final verse (7) summarizes what has gone before, in the name of the Vasiṣṭhas.

Verse 2b contains an impossible hapax, *bī́riṭe*, phonologically aberrant and morphologically opaque. It is generally taken as "crowd, troop," following Yāska, but, as there is no particular etymological or contextual support for this, we have simply declined to translate it.

1. Agni, erect, has just propped up the favor of the good one. The firebrand goes, facing toward the divine assemblage.
   The two (pressing-)stones take to the path like charioteers. The Hotar, when prompted, will offer a true (hymn) as sacrifice.
2. The one receiving very pleasurable offerings [=Agni] has twisted the ritual grass for them [=gods]. Like two clanlords at [/in] *bī́riṭa* [?], they hasten here,
   (the clanlords) of clans, at (the coming) of dawn from night, at the Early Invocation—Pūṣan and Vāyu with his team, for well-being.
3. Here on the earth the good ones, the gods have come to rest. The resplendent ones groom themselves in the wide midspace.
   You all who extend widely, make your paths inclined hither. Harken to this messenger of ours [=Agni] who has gone (to you).
4. Because these helpers, worthy to receive sacrifice at the sacrifices, the gods, all surmount the seat,
   sacrifice to them, who desire it, at the ceremony, o Agni, with obedience—to Bhaga, the Nāsatyas, Plenitude.
5. O Agni, bring Mitra, Varuṇa, and Indra here from heaven and from earth to the hymns and to the fire—
   also Aryaman, Aditi, Viṣṇu the quick. Let Sarasvatī and the Maruts make themselves exhilarated.
6. I have bestowed an oblation along with poetic thoughts on those worthy of the sacrifice. The insatiable one [=Agni] will attain the desire of mortals.
   Confer inexhaustible ever-winning wealth. Might we be accompanied by the gods, who will now be our yokemates.
7. Now have the two World-Halves been praised by the Vasiṣṭhas, and the truthful ones, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Agni.
   Let the glittering ones hold out to us the utmost chant. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.40 (556) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The preoccupation of this hymn is the distribution of wealth, to be carried out in orderly and fair fashion by a series of gods, starting in verse 1 with Savitar and Bhaga (Fortune), whose involvement in the apportioning of treasures we met in the nearby hymn VII.38. But a wide variety of gods are implicated in this giving, as well as in providing other help (see vss. 3–4). There is little to attract particular attention in this hymn, save for the sly admonition to Pūṣan not to be jealous of our receiving gifts (vs. 6).

1. Let attentive hearing come together with (speech?) appropriate to
   the rite of distribution. Might we (properly) aim our praise of the
   surpassing ones.
   When today god Savitar will give the impetus, may we be at the
   apportioning of him who possesses treasures [=Bhaga].
2. Let Mitra, Varuṇa, and the two World-Halves, let Indra and Aryaman
   give us what is apportioned by heaven.
   Let goddess Aditi designate the legacy that both Vāyu and Bhaga will
   harness.
3. Let him be powerful, Maruts, let him be headstrong—just that mortal
   whom you will help, you of the dappled horses.
   And Agni and Sarasvatī spur him on. There exists no one who can
   encompass his wealth.
4. Because this leader of truth, Varuṇa, as well as Mitra and Aryaman, (all)
   kings, have accomplished their work—
   and goddess Aditi, easy to invoke and without assault—they will bring
   us unharmed across difficult straits.
5. There is propitiation for this god who grants rewards [=Rudra], at the
   ritual offering to quick Viṣṇu, with oblations,
   for Rudra knows his own Rudrian might. Aśvins, drive your circuit of
   refreshment.
6. Don't get envious now, glowing Pūṣan, when the Shielding Goddess and
   the Gift-Escorts will make bestowal.
   Let the steeds who are joy itself protect us. Let Wind in his circling
   give rain.
7. Now have the two World-Halves been praised by the Vasiṣṭhas, and the
   truthful ones, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Agni.
   Let the glittering ones hold out to us the utmost chant. – Do you protect
   us always with your blessings.

VII.41 (557) Bhaga, except Assorted Divinities (1) and Dawn (7)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

Like the last hymn, this one is completely devoted to our acquisition of wealth by distribution, but here the distribution is ascribed almost entirely to Bhaga, the god of Fortune, whose name also means "portion." The hymn begins (vs. 1) with a general invocation of a range of gods in early morning, including Bhaga, but the next five verses (2–5) call insistently on Bhaga, punning several times on his name. The early-morning context of the hymn returns with the last two verses (6–7), concerning the Dawns, who bring Bhaga with them (vs. 6). The final verse, which does not mention Bhaga, is found also in a Dawn hymn later in the VIIth Maṇḍala (VII.80.3) and is clearly extra-hymnic here.

1. At early morning we call on Agni, at early morning on Indra, at early morning on Mitra and Varuṇa, at early morning on the Aśvins;
   at early morning on Bhaga, Pūṣan, Brahmaṇaspati, at early morning on Soma and Rudra should we call.
2. We should call on the one victorious at early morning, Bhaga the strong, Aditi's son, who is the distributor,
   to whom even a person who thinks himself weak (and also) even the powerful, even the king says "Apportion me a portion."
3. O Bhaga the leader, o Bhaga whose generosity is real, o Bhaga—promote this poetic insight of ours as you give to us.
   Bhaga, propagate us with cows and horses; Bhaga, might we, possessed of superior men, be preeminent through our men.
4. And just now might we be possessed of portion [/accompanied by Bhaga], and at evening and at the middle of the days,
   and at the rising of the sun, o bounteous one, might we be in the good grace of the gods.
5. Let Bhaga himself be possessed of portion, o gods. In this way might we be possessed of portion [/accompanied by Bhaga].
   Each and every one constantly calls on you, Bhaga. Become our guide here, Bhaga.
6. The Dawns (will) jointly bow in reverence to the ceremony, like Dadhikrāvan to the gleaming footprint [=sacrificial ground].
   Like prizewinning horses a chariot let them convey the goods-finding Bhaga here in our direction.
7. Let the Dawns, accompanied by horses, by cows, by heroes, dawn always auspicious for us,
   milking out ghee on all sides, teeming. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.42 (558) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Like VII.39, this hymn concerns the dawn soma sacrifice and especially Agni's role in it. The hymn begins with a verse expressing the readiness of all the ritual elements. Then Agni takes over and provides the impetus, hitching up his flames in verse 2, and, as he gets larger, performing the sacrifice (vss. 3, 5). In verse 4 Agni (identified as a guest, as often) is asked for the reward that is the expected return for a successful sacrifice. The final verse (6) is a typical summary verse and names Vasiṣṭha as the poet, as in another summary verse in this series (VII.39.7=40.7). Although this is an All God hymn, the participation of named gods other than Agni is limited to verse 5, where they are the simply the recipients of the sacrifice. The mention of Aṅgirases in verse 1 is probably meant as a reference to the poet and the other priests.

1. The Aṅgirases, possessors of the sacred formulation, are reaching forth.
   Let the roar of (the hymn? fire? soma?) that is set to burst out go questing forth.
   The cows swimming in the waters are bellowing forth. The two pressing-stones should be yoked, as the ornament of the ceremony.
2. Easy is your road, Agni, which was found long ago. Yoke your fallow bays and chestnuts when the soma is pressed,
   or those ruddy ones which, conveying heroes, are at your seat. Seated, I call the races of gods.
3. They magnify the sacrifice for you all with acts of reverence; the gladdening Hotar [=Agni] is projecting in the nearness.
   Sacrifice well to the gods, o you of many faces. You should turn hither Aramati [/Devotion] worthy of the sacrifice.
4. When in the dwelling of a rich hero the guest will show brightly, lying in his comfortable womb,
   Agni, well pleased, well established in the house, will give to a clan such as this a desirable reward.
5. Enjoy this ceremony of ours, o Agni. Make it glorious for us among the Maruts and Indra.
   Then sit here on the ritual grass night and dawn. Sacrifice here to Mitra and Varuṇa, who desire it.
6. Just in this way Vasiṣṭha, desirous of wealth (like) the distillate of all mother's milk, praised powerful Agni.
   He will spread out refreshment, wealth, and victory's prize for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.43 (559) All Gods

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn has even less interest in individual gods than the most recent in this All God series. Instead the sacrifice is again the focus: it is set in motion in verses 1–2, with the priests exhorted to perform the ritual actions in the latter verse. The gods' attendance is described in verses 3–4, and the poet's relative indifference to their individual identities is expressed in the phrase "however many you are" at the end of verse 4. Appropriate to the ritual focus, Agni is the only god named (besides a glancing reference to Heaven and Earth in vs. 1), and his actions and companionship are crucial to our well-being.

1. At the sacrifices those seeking the gods chant forth for you all to Heaven and Earth with acts of reverence, in order to prosper—
   those whose unequalled, inspired sacred formulations go questing in divergent directions like the branches of a tree.
2. Let the sacrifice go forth, like a team to be spurred on. Being of one mind, hold up the (ladles) facing toward the ghee;
   spread the ritual grass that brings success to the ceremony. The flames, seeking the gods, have stood up erect.
3. Like piggyback children on their mother, let the gods sit on the back of the ritual grass.
   Let (the ladle) facing in all directions anoint (the speech?) appropriate to the rite of distribution. O Agni, do not make us negligent in our attendance on the gods.
4. Those worthy of sacrifices do service to themselves according to their pleasure, milking for themselves the good milkers, the streams of truth.
   Preeminent is the greatness of you good ones here today: come here, being of one mind, however many you are.
5. In just this way, o Agni, show favor to our clans. In company with you, o mighty one,
   with wealth as our yokemate, we feasting companions are free from harm. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.44 (560) Dadhikrā, except Assorted Divinities (1)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

Like VII.41, this hymn begins with a verse in jagatī calling on a number of gods, especially those associated with the dawn ritual, and including the figure that

will be the subject of most of the rest of the hymn, in this case the celebrated racehorse Dadhikrā(van). (See IV.38–40 for other hymns devoted to Dadhikrā; the last two [39—40] also show significant dawn associations.) Unlike VII.41, however, where the god who is subject of the rest of the hymn, Bhaga, holds the stage essentially alone after the first verse, Dadhikrā shares each of the subsequent verses with a number of gods, again primarily characteristic of the dawn ritual.

The most difficult verse is 3, not coincidentally the middle verse, whose third pāda contains two color terms as addressees and a next-to-impossible hapax (*mām̐ścatóḥ*), whose meaning is hotly disputed. Most commentators interpret the color terms as referring to other horses. Our interpretation is quite different and unavoidably speculative, but rather than introducing two otherwise unknown horses, we identify the two addressees as gods associated with the ritual. In our view the hapax refers to the two twilights (literally, "the time of the hiding of the moon," originally applied just to dawn), and the copper-colored one is the sun, whose color is reddish at rising and setting, while the reddish-brown one is soma: the same color term is used of soma a number of times.

Though it is not entirely clear why Dadhikrā is so strongly associated with the dawn, it may be significant that the priestly gifts (dakṣiṇā) are distributed at the dawn ritual and horses are among the most prized of these gifts. In most of this hymn the equine aspects of Dadhikrā are not emphasized, except for vs. 4, unlike the Dadhikrā hymns in Maṇḍala IV.

1. Upon Dadhikrā as the first, upon the Aśvins and Dawn, upon the
   kindled Agni and Bhaga, do I call for your sake for help,
   upon Indra, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, and Brahmaṇaspati, upon the Ādityas,
   Heaven and Earth, the Waters, and the Sun.
2. Awakening Dadhikrā with homage, rousing ourselves and reverently
   approaching the sacrifice,
   seating the goddess Refreshment on the ritual grass, we would call upon
   the Aśvins, inspired poets easy to call.
3. To Dadhikrāvan and Agni do I speak on having awakened, and to Dawn,
   the Sun, and the Cow,
   to the one of Varuṇa who is copper-colored at the twilights [=sun?] and
   to the reddish-brown one [=soma?]. Let them keep all difficulties away
   from us.
4. Dadhikrāvan becomes the foremost prizewinning steed at the forefront
   of the chariots, as the foreknowing one,
   being in accord with Dawn and the Sun, with the Ādityas, Vasus, and
   Aṅgirases.
5. Let Dadhikrā anoint our pathway, for us to follow along the path
   of truth.
   Let the divine troop and Agni hear us. Let all the buffaloes, who are
   never fooled, hear us.

VII.45 (561) Savitar

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: triṣṭubh

This simple hymn concentrates on Savitar as giver of goods and human necessities, though several of his other characteristic acts are mentioned, notably the raising of his golden arms (vs. 2) and the daily bringing to rest and impelling forth of the living world (vs. 1).

1. Let god Savitar drive here, possessed of good treasure, filling the midspace, journeying with his horses,
   holding many things meant for men in his hand, bringing the world to rest and impelling it forth.
2. His two golden arms, pliant and lofty, have reached up to the ends of heaven.
   Now this greatness of his has been marveled at. Even the sun has ceded to him his task.
3. The overpowering god Savitar will impel good things here as the lord of goods.
   Spreading wide his broad emblem, he will then grant to us the sustenance for mortals.
4. These songs here reverently invoke Savitar of good tongue and good palms, whose fists are full.
   Let him confer on us brilliant, lofty vigor. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.46 (562) Rudra

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: jagatī 1–3, triṣṭubh 4

This brief hymn primarily begs Rudra to restrain his characteristic power to do harm, though it also mentions in passing his healing and helpful gifts (vss. 3–4).

1. Bring these songs to Rudra, whose bow is taut and whose arrow is swift, to the god of independent power,
   to the unvanquishable, vanquishing adept whose weapons are sharp. Let him hear us.
2. For in consequence of his dwelling place he takes cognizance of the earthly race and, in consequence of his universal rule, of the heavenly.
   Providing help, proceed toward our doors that provide help (in return). Bring no affliction to our children, Rudra.
3. The missile of yours, which, shot downward from heaven, circles around the earth—let it avoid us.

A thousand are your remedies, o you who are our familiar. Do no harm to our offspring and descendants.

4. Do not smite us, Rudra. Do not deliver us up. Let us not be in the toils of you in your anger.
   Give us a share in the ritual grass and in the praise of the living. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.47 (563) Waters

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: triṣṭubh

The waters are celebrated here primarily in their ritual employment, in the preparation of soma—though soma itself is not explicitly mentioned. These waters come to be replaced by the rivers in the last two verses (3–4), but *their* physical characteristics are not mentioned either. However, the final pāda before the refrain (4c) alludes to the rivers' making "wide space" for us, quite possibly an allusion to the enlarging of the Ārya territory by crossing and conquering rivers.

1. O Waters, your wave of refreshments that those devoted to the gods made Indra's first drink—
   it, gleaming and unbesmirched, showering ghee and filled with honey, might we win today.
2. That wave of yours, o Waters, most filled with honey—let the Child of the Waters who impels swift (horses) help it.
   That on which Indra, along with the Vasus, will bring himself to exhilaration, that one of yours might we, seeking the gods, attain today.
3. Possessing a hundred filters, delighting in their independent power, the goddesses [=Waters] merge into the fold of the gods.
   They do not confound the commandments of Indra. To the rivers pour an oblation filled with ghee.
4. Toward whom the sun has stretched out with its rays, for whom Indra has dug out a way, a wave,
   do you, o Rivers, provide wide space for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.48 (564) Ṛbhus

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: triṣṭubh

The three Ṛbhus are most commonly named Ṛbhu, Vāja, and Vibhvan, and they stand alongside Indra, who is sometimes called *ṛbhukṣán* "Master of the Ṛbhus,"

although *ṛbhukṣán* can also be a description or name for Ṛbhu, as it clearly is in 3c and must also be in 1a. Here as elsewhere the three Ṛbhus can be invoked by the name of any one of them in the plural. A partial exception is that the stem *vibhván* or *víbhvan* is replaced by *víbhū* or *vibhú* in the plural to name Vibhvan and the other two Ṛbhus. Further, in this hymn verse 2 employs *víbhvaḥ* as an equivalent to *víbhvā(m̐)*, the nominative of Vibhvan. Although the use of the plural of one name to designate the three gods is peculiar in translation, we have retained the Vedic idiom to avoid prolonging the addresses to the gods.

The complex mixing of stems and singular and plural forms in such a short hymn suggests that the poet is deliberately drawing attention to the names of the Ṛbhus and their meanings. Such a strategy is probably behind the repetitions in verse 2, which mentions "Ṛbhu with the Ṛbhus," then "Vibhvan" (or more accurately "Vibhva") "with the Vibhus," and "Vāja… in winning the *vā́ja*." The meaning of *ṛbhú* is approximately "craftsman," *víbhū* and *vibhú* are "far-ranging," and *vā́ja* is "prize." These are all things or imply qualities that the sacrificers want, and indeed in 2ab the poet asks that the sacrificers be a "Ṛbhu" or "a craftsman" and a "Vibhvan" or "far-ranging" in the company of Ṛbhus and Vibhus in order to win a *vā́ja*, a prize.

1. O Ṛbhukṣans, o Vājas, among us find exhilaration in our pressed soma, o generous men.
   Like travelers' intentions, let them [=your horses] make you, who are turned this way, and your manly chariot roll here, o Vibhūs.
2. As Ṛbhu with the Ṛbhus, as Vibhvan with the Vibhus, we would overcome vast powers by your vast powers.
   Let Vāja help us in winning the prize (*vā́ja*). With Indra as our yokemate, we would overcome our Vṛtra [=obstacle].
3. Because these very ones [=Indra and the Ṛbhus] overcome many (commands) by their command, they conquer (even) in the face of the superiority of the outsider.
   Indra, Vibhvan, Ṛbhukṣan, and Vāja will put away the manliness of the outsider and of the rival by confronting it.
4. O gods, now make for us wide space. Be of one accord to help us.
   The good (gods) should give refreshment to us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.49 (565) Waters

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: triṣṭubh

In contrast to VII.47, the waters in this hymn have more physical definition: in particular, verse 2 gives a notable typology of types of water: "heavenly waters" (rain),

"those that flow" (rivers), "those found by digging" (well water), and "those that arise by themselves" (springs)—all of which end by flowing into the sea. But the purity and purifying power of flowing waters, noted in the first three verses, gives them a moral as well as a physical quality, and in verse 3 the god Varuṇa in his role as observer and judge of human actions is found among them. From passages like this it is easy to see how Varuṇa came to be so closely associated with the waters, a dominant characteristic of Varuṇa in later times. Verse 4 moves from the physical and moral to the ritual realm, to the employment of water in the soma sacrifice, the theme that prevailed in VII.47.

1. They come from the middle of the (heavenly?) ocean, those whose chief is the sea—becoming pure, never settling down,
   whom the mace-bearing Indra, the bull, dug out—let those waters, goddesses, help me here.
2. The heavenly waters, or those that flow, or are found by digging, or arise by themselves,
   those, clear and pure, whose goal is the sea—let those waters, goddesses, help me here.
3. In the middle of which King Varuṇa travels, looking down upon the truth and falsehood of the peoples,
   those, clear and pure, that drip honey—let those waters, goddesses, help me here.
4. Among which King Varuṇa, among which Soma, among which all the gods take their nourishment for exhilaration,
   into which Agni Vaiśvānara entered—let those waters, goddesses, help me here.

VII.50 (566) Mitra and Varuṇa (1), Agni (2), the All Gods (3), the Rivers (4)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
4 verses: jagatī 1–3, atijagatī or śakvarī 4

This is one of the relatively few healing hymns in the Ṛgveda. The hymn is included among those to the waters because of the last verse invoking the rivers for their help. For a translation of the hymn and notes on the various lexical problems in it, see Zysk (1985: 28 and 130–32).

The afflictions against which this hymn is recited center on the feet. The reference to the "creeping thing" in the refrain of 1–3 led Velankar (1963) to propose that the hymn is for treatment against different kinds of poison but especially against snake venom. However, the symptoms and the causes of the foot problems, even though they are too unclear to determine, appear to be varied. Zysk (p. 131) identifies the "creeping thing" as the *ajakāva* (vs. 1), "an evil-looking, crawling animal. . . which

was known to have lived under the skin and to have formed a swelling or eruption" (pp. 25–26). However, the *ajakāva* could also be referred to in 1b and therefore be an ulcer or a swelling, if, as Renou (*EVP* XVI: 111) suggests, "the nesting thing" is a skin lesion in contrast to a "swelling thing" on the skin. Likewise, we cannot identify the *vijāman* joint, although it could be located in the foot, since the eruption apparently spreads from it to the ankles and knees. And, as Zysk (pp. 131–32) argues, the last verse probably refers to two kinds of female demons, the *śipadā* and *śimidā*, who polluted waters and caused the foot problems.

1. Guard me here, Mitra and Varuṇa. Do not let the nesting or the swelling thing come upon us.
   I put the *ajakāva* of vile appearance out of sight. – Let not the creeping thing find me, bringing a disease of the foot.
2. What eruption will appear on the *vijāman* joint and will become smeared over the knees and ankles,
   let blazing Agni force that away from here. – Let not the creeping thing find me, bringing a disease of the foot.
3. What poison is in the silk cotton tree, what in streams, and what is produced from plants,
   let the All Gods propel that away from here. – Let not the creeping thing find me, bringing a disease of the foot.
4. (The rivers) that are from the slope, depth, and height, those that are filled with water and those empty of water—
   let (these) kindly (river-)goddesses, swelling with (waters as their) milk, become for us free of *śipadā*-demons,
   let all the rivers become free of *śimidā*-demons.

VII.51 (567) Ādityas

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a general exhortation to the Ādityas to protect the sacrifice, keeping its performance in "offenselessness" (*adititvá*), in accordance with their character as sons of Aditi, the goddess who represents offenselessness or innocence. In the later rite the offering of soma to Mitra and Varuṇa (as well as to the other dual divinities) takes place in the morning and that to the Ādityas (as well as to other divine collectives) in the evening. The gods in the last verse are worshiped at various times in the sacrificial day, but there appears to be an emphasis on gods associated with the evening rite: the Ādityas, All Gods, R̥bhus, and even the Aśvins, who are connected with both the morning and the evening rituals.

1. We would be accompanied by the present help of the Ādityas and by their most luck-bringing protection.

Let the overpowering ones establish this sacrifice in guiltlessness and in offenselessness (*adititvá*), listening (to us).

2. Let the Ādityas and Aditi find exhilaration, let Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa, who are the most straightforward.
   Let the herdsmen of the living world be ours. Let them drink the soma to help us today.
3. All the Ādityas, and all the Maruts, and the All Gods, and all the R̥bhus,
   Indra, Agni, and the two Aśvins, (all) being praised. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.52 (568) Ādityas

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This short and probably late hymn has a number of unusual features. In verse 1 the poet describes himself and his fellow sacrificers as *áditi* "offenseless," and because they are *áditi* they are also *ādityá* "Ādityas" or "sons of Aditi." This is a surprising claim, and Geldner understandably softens it by turning the metaphor into a simile. According to him, the poet asks that he and his people be offenseless *like* Ādityas. Were we to adopt Geldner's approach, then in 1b we could supply a different verb form and translate "there should be for us a fortress" (so Geldner) or "you [=Ādityas] should be for us a fortress." This solution is attractive since gods are called fortresses in, for example, I.189.2 and VII.95.1. But there is no signal in the text for the simile or for the ellipsis, and therefore, albeit with considerable hesitation, we have translated the verse as if the speakers embody the "offenseless" gods. That theme of offenselessness is continued in the next verse, in which the poet begs that he and the sacrificers not be held responsible for the evil actions done by others.

In the last verse the poet speaks of the presence of the Aṅgirases in this sacrifice, which suggests that the present priests now embody the legendary Aṅgiras priests, a claim implicitly made elsewhere as well. The appeal to Savitar, who is associated with the evening, and in verse 3d the reference to the All Gods, who in the later rite receive offerings at the Third Pressing, place this hymn in that soma-pressing. The identity of the "father" (vs. 3c) remains mysterious. Sāyaṇa identifies him as Varuṇa since Varuṇa and Mitra are the fathers of Vasiṣṭha (cf. VII.33.11–13), but there is little basis for associating Varuṇa here with either the Aṅgirases or the All Gods.

1. We would be offenseless (*áditi*) sons of Aditi, and a fortress among gods and mortals, o Vasus.
   Winning (this) we would win, o Mitra and Varuṇa. Becoming (this) we would become greater, o Heaven and Earth.
2. Mitra, Varuṇa, (and the other Vasus) will be ready to give us this: protection as our herdsmen for our kith and kin.

Let us not suffer the guilt toward you that is born from another. Let us not do that which you avenge, o Vasus.

3. The swift Aṅgirases have reached here, begging treasure of the god Savitar;
our great father, worthy of the sacrifice, and the All Gods, of one mind, will find pleasure in this.

VII.53 (569) Heaven and Earth

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Heaven and Earth here figure just as objects of worship, not as physically conceived entities. Verses 1–2 emphasize their antiquity and the antiquity of the poetic celebration of them, while verse 3 asks, as usual, for their gifts.

1. I urgently invoke Heaven and Earth, the lofty ones worthy of the sacrifice, with sacrifices and acts of reverence,
for the ancient poets who also hymned them set in front those two great ones whose sons are the gods.
2. With newer hymns bring forward into the seat of truth the two ancient-born parents.
O Heaven and Earth, journey here to us with the divine folk. Great is your protection.
3. And because there exist many occasions for you to provide treasures to the good giver [/Sudās], o Heaven and Earth,
provide for us something that will not be stunted. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.54 (570) Lord of the Dwelling Place (Vāstoṣpati)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This short hymn (but also see the first verse of the next one) is addressed to the personified guardian spirit of the house and household and in later ritual is recited for entry into a new house.

1. O Lord of the Dwelling Place, greet us. Become easy to enter and without affliction for us.
When we entreat you, favor us in return: become weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.

2. O Lord of the Dwelling Place, be one who furthers us, fattening the livestock with cows, with horses, o drop.
   In your companionship might we be unaging. Like a father his sons, favor us in return.
3. O Lord of the Dwelling Place, might we be accompanied by your capable fellowship, joy-bringing, providing the way.
   Protect us at will in peace and war. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.55 (571) Lord of the Dwelling Place (Vāstoṣpati) (1), Sleep Incantations (2–8)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: gāyatrī 1, upariṣṭādbr̥hatī 2–4, anuṣṭubh 5–8

As was noted in the introduction to VII.54, the first verse of this hymn, dedicated to the Lord of the Dwelling Place, really belongs with the previous hymn—though it was not simply wrongly divided from that hymn: it is in a different meter, and the final verse of VII.54 ends with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain, which is always the final pāda of the hymns in which it is found.

What follows this first verse is one of the most beloved and most delightful of R̥gvedic hymns, a sleep charm, a species of lullaby. It is divided into two parts by the meter (vss. 2–4, 5–8), but forms a conceptual unity. Verses 2–4 are addressed to a dog, presumably a watchdog barking in the night, who is urged to go to sleep. The dog is given a grand metronymic, "son of Saramā," the legendary bitch of Indra, who on Indra's behalf tracked down the cows stolen by the Paṇis and retrieved them, in the memorable dialogue hymn X.108.

The next two verses (5–6) are an incantatory listing of each member of the household, sending them all to sleep one by one (reminiscent of the modern American children's book *Goodnight Moon*). The next verse (7) puts them all to sleep with the moonrise, with the final verse devoted to an intriguing set of unidentified women falling asleep wherever they happen to be. This fleeting picture of somnolent ladies reminds us of several similar famous scenes in much later Indian literature, such as the sleeping *rākṣasī*s in Rāvaṇa's household in Laṅka in the Rāmāyaṇa (V.7.30–62, 8.30–46) and the sleeping women whose fleshy sensuality disgusts Siddhārtha, the future Buddha, in Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita (V.47–67).

A number of fanciful scenarios have been devised, both ancient and modern, Indian and Western, as the backstory of this hymn, but this creative plotting seems unnecessary: the hymn can be simply enjoyed for itself.

1. Destroying affliction, o Lord of the Dwelling Place, entering all forms,
   be a companion well disposed to us.

2. When, o silvery son of Saramā, you bare your teeth, tawny one,
   they glint like spears, in the jaws of (you) who are snapping. Go to sleep!
3. Bark at the thief, o son of Saramā, or at the robber, you who lunge (at them) again and again.
   You are barking at the praisers of Indra. Why do you torment us? Go to sleep!
4. Keep tearing at the boar; let the boar keep tearing at you.
   You are barking at the praisers of Indra. Why do you torment us? Go to sleep!
5. Let the mother sleep, let the father sleep; let the dog sleep, let the clanlord sleep.
   Let all the relations sleep; let this folk round about sleep.
6. Whoever sits still and whoever wanders, and whoever sees us—such folk—
   their eyes do we slam shut—just like this house.
7. The thousand-horned bull who rises up from the sea [=moon],
   with this mighty one we make the folks sleep.
8. The ladies lying on benches, those lying on litters, those lying on beds,
   the women of pleasant scent—all these do we make sleep.

VII.56 (572) Maruts

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
25 verses: dvipadā virāj 1–11, triṣṭubh 12–25

This hymn is structured like VII.34, an All God hymn, in that the first part is in the short dvipadā meter and the second part in triṣṭubh, although the proportions of verses in each meter are different. It also shares a final verse with VII.34, a generic plea for the gods' protection. But in content there is little in common between the two hymns.

This hymn begins with four verses about the birth and identity of the Maruts, alluding both to their mysterious generation from Pṛśni (see esp. vs. 4) and the paradox that they are both identical ("belonging to the same nest," vs. 1) and separate and rivalrous. This theme then disappears from the hymn, save for several references to their plural "names" (vss. 10, 14; we of course know them only under one name, "Maruts"). The rest of the dvipadā section (vss. 5–11) is essentially descriptive, of their power, beauty, and accoutrements.

Although this celebration of the Maruts' qualities continues in the triṣṭubh portion, there is also a significant ritual component, initiated in the first half of verse 12. Subsequent verses make clear what ritual is involved: in verse 14 it is said that they are worshiped at the beginning of the sacrifice, and they are invited to enjoy the House-offering; in verse 16 they are called "playful." In middle Vedic ritual the third and last of the "Four-monthly" (Cāturmāsyāni) rituals is the Sākamedha,

celebrated in the autumn. On the day before the Sākamedha day proper, the Maruts receive two oblations—thus, they are worshiped at the beginning of the sacrifice. Moreover, the second of these two oblations is the "House-offering" (Gr̥hamedhīya). And on the next day there is an offering to the "playful Maruts," using the same word that describes their behavior in verse 16d. (For further reference to the Maruts at the Sākamedha in this Marut cycle, see VII.59.9–10. On the ritual itself see, e.g., Hillebrandt 1897: 117–19; Keith 1925: 322–23.)

As usual, offerings to the gods prompt us to ask for reciprocal benefits from the gods, and these requests occupy much of the remaining verses (17–24), with the final refrain verse (25) extending the requests to other gods as well. The last few request verses specific to the Maruts (vss. 22–24) ask for their help in battles over land and waters, alluding presumably to the Ārya expansion.

1. Who, separately, are these anointed superior men who belong to the same nest—
   the young bloods of Rudra, possessing good horses?
2. For no one knows their (separate) births.
   But certainly *they* know, mutually, each his own separate means of begetting.
3. They sprinkled each other mutually, each with his own self-purifying (rain drops? semen?).
   The falcons with the wind's roar contended among themselves.
4. These are the secrets the insightful one perceives:
   what great Pr̥śni bore as her udder.
5. Let this clan be possessed of good heroes in (the form of) Maruts,
   the clan prevailing from of old, fostering its manly power.
6. Best driving their drive, most beautiful in beauty, supplied with splendor, strong with strengths—
7. Strong is your strength, steadfast your forces. Thus the flock with its Maruts is powerful.
8. Beautiful is your bluster, raging are the minds of the bold troop, like a raving ecstatic.
9. Keep your missile away from us, with all its gear;
   let your ill-will not reach us here.
10. I call the dear names of you precipitate ones,
    when you are here bellowing to your hearts' content, o Maruts.
11. They are possessed of good weapons and arrows, of lovely neck-ornaments,
    and are themselves beautifying their own bodies.

12. Gleaming are the oblations for you gleaming ones, o Maruts. I set in motion a gleaming ceremonial course for the gleaming ones.
    By truth the servers of truth came to reality—the gleaming ones of gleaming birth, pure.

13. On your shoulders, Maruts, are spangles, on your breasts brilliants are being set.
Like lightning flashes shining forth with the rains, (you are) holding yourselves ready with your weapons according to your nature.
14. Your deep-grounded great powers rise forth. Set forth your names, you who are worshiped at the forefront of the sacrifice.
Enjoy this thousandfold domestic portion of the House-offering, o Maruts.
15. If, Maruts, you give study to what is praised in just this way at the invocation of the prizewinning inspired poet,
right away give of wealth consisting of heroes, which another man, a non-giver, will never swindle.
16. The Maruts, well directed like racehorses—the young bloods beautify themselves to look like wondrous apparitions;
they are beautiful like children who live in a grand house, playful like calves still suckling.
17. Showing favor, let the Maruts be merciful to us, as they make the two well-fixed world-halves spacious.
Let your cow-smiting, man-smiting weapon stay at a distance. With benevolent thoughts bow to us, good ones.
18. The Hotar, once installed, keeps calling for your giving to be completely directed hither, Maruts, while he is himself being hymned.
He who is the herdsman of such (wealth), o bulls, without duplicity he calls upon you with solemn words.
19. These Maruts here bring the hasty to a halt; they make might bow to might.
They protect the laud from the rapacious; they establish heavy hatred for the ungenerous.
20. These Maruts here spur on even the feeble, likewise also the whirlwind, in whatever way the good ones please.
Thrust aside the dark shades, o bulls. Confer all life and lineage on us.
21. Let us not miss out on your gift, o Maruts; let us not lag behind at the distribution, o charioteers.
Give us a share in the goods we crave, whatever you have of good quality, o bulls.
22. When the peoples, the champions clash together in frenzies at (contests for) the boisterous (rivers), the plants, and the clans,
then, o Maruts, Rudriyas, become our rescuers in the battles with the stranger.
23. Maruts, you have given rise to many solemn speeches from the Forefathers, which have been recited to you long since:

along with the Maruts the strong one is the victor in battles; just along with the Maruts does the charger win the prize.

24. Beside us let there be a forceful hero, o Maruts, who is lord and apportioner for the people,
 with whom we might cross over the waters to good dwelling. Then, (thanks to) you, might we dominate our own home.
25. Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, the waters, the plants, the trees shall enjoy this of ours.
 May we be in the shelter, in the lap of the Maruts. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.57 (573) Maruts

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Ritual offering to the Maruts is the subject of this whole hymn, although, unlike the preceding hymn, no specific ritual is referred to. The hymn begins with an invitation offered to the Maruts to the sacrificial "honey" (soma), an invitation phrased in a way very close to the English idiom indicating potential possession "has their name on it" (at least in our interpretation). They travel to the sacrifice and, having received the guest reception, are asked to sit on the ritual grass, to receive the oblation (vs. 2). The sacrifice is successfully concluded in verse 5, and their help and gifts requested. The last two verses (6–7) seem to be a summary of the ritual process—in 6 they are urged to come in pursuit of oblations, in 7 to come in order to give help in return—the two verses being unified by the opening "when praised."

Verse 4 is somewhat odd in a Marut context. Although it is common to beg the Maruts to keep their missile away from us (see, e.g., the preceding hymn, VII.56.9), the reference to an "offense" committed by us humans is more appropriate to a Varuṇa or Āditya context: see especially the use of the term in the Vasiṣṭha-Varuṇa hymns later in this maṇḍala (VII.86.4, 87.7, 88.6), since the Maruts are not usually associated with moral issues (though see vs. 5 in the next hymn, VII.58). Much more typical is the lovely description of the glittering Maruts in verse 3.

1. Your honey has the name "Marut," o you who deserve the sacrifice. At the sacrifices they become invigorated with its strength:
 they who set even the two wide world-halves to trembling, the mighty ones swell the wellspring, when they have journeyed.
2. It's surely the Maruts who take note of the singer, who lead forward the thought of the sacrificer.
 Sit on our ritual grass today, having been graciously received, to pursue (the oblations) at the rites of distribution.

3. The others do not glitter like these Maruts here, with their brilliants, their weapons, their bodies.
   All adorned, themselves adorning the two world-halves, they smear a common unguent on themselves for beauty.
4. Let your missile stay aside, Maruts. When we will do offense to you in our human fashion,
   let us not come into its way [=missile], o you who deserve the sacrifice. Let your most delightful favor rest in us.
5. The Maruts have taken pleasure in what has been done here [=sacrifice]—those faultless, gleaming, pure ones.
   Promote us with your favors, o you who deserve the sacrifice. Further us with prizes for our thriving.
6. And, when praised by all their names, let the Maruts, superior men, pursue the oblations.
   Give of immortality to our progeny; awaken riches, liberalities, bounties.
7. When praised, o Maruts, come hither, all of you in your totality, with help to the patrons,
   who, possessing hundreds, strengthen us by themselves. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.58 (574) Maruts

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭub

A description of the fearsome power of the Maruts, embodiments of the thunderstorm, begins the hymn (vss. 1–2), but the topic turns to their power to help the poet and his patrons in verses 3–4, with the mythic model, their aid to Indra, invoked briefly in verse 4. In verse 5 the potential anger of the Maruts is mentioned, and we seek to atone for whatever act occasioned it. Like the human offense punished in verse 4 of the previous hymn, VII.57, this moral tone is somewhat out of place in a Marut hymn. However, here the reference to the Maruts' father, Rudra the punisher and healer, provides a better context for this scene of anger and atonement. The final verse (6) is a summary verse, referring to the performance in the immediate past of the praise hymn that constitutes the first five verses.

1. Chant forth to the flock, grown strong all together, which has the power of its divine nature.
   They pound the two world-halves with their greatness; they reach to the vault from chaos, from propless (space).
2. Even your birth, Maruts, (was attended) by turbulence, you fearsome ones, of powerful battle fury, unruly,

who stand out because of their great powers and their strength.
Everyone who sees the sun takes fear at your journey.

3. Impart lofty vigor to our bounteous (patrons). Only the Maruts shall enjoy our good praise.
Like a road when it's traveled, (the flock) will bring the people across; may it further us with the help we crave.
4. Aided by you, Maruts, the inspired poet gets hundreds; aided by you, the charger is victorious, bringing thousands;
aided by you, (Indra) is sovereign king and smites Vṛtra. Let this giving of yours stand out, you shakers.
5. I seek to entice here these (sons) of Rudra the rewarder. Surely the Maruts will bow to us again?
If they are angry in secret, if openly, we make recompense for this transgression to the forceful ones.
6. The good praise hymn of the bounteous ones has been proclaimed: this is the hymn the Maruts enjoy.
Even from a distance keep away hatred, you bulls. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.59 (575) Maruts (1–11), Rudra (12)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
12 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī 1–6, arranged in pragāthas, triṣṭubh 7–8, gāyatrī 9–11, anuṣṭubh 12

As the variety of meters suggests, this is a composite hymn, with some of the sections clearly appended at the end of the Marut sequence. Its length confirms this analysis, since the previous hymn contained only six verses.

The first six verses consist of three pairs of pragāthas concerning the ritual service offered first to a collection of gods (vs. 1, probably vs. 2) and then particularly to the Maruts (vss. 3–6) and the benefits that accrue to the sacrificer. Vasiṣṭha names himself in verse 3. This six-verse sequence conforms to the numerical pattern of the Marut cycle and could have been original to it. The following two triṣṭubh verses (7–8) continue the same theme, though more vividly. In particular, in verse 7 the Maruts are compared to "dark-backed geese," preening themselves in secret and then flying here. This may be a reference to how quickly storms can seem to arise, with thunderclouds fully developed ("preened in secret").

The last four verses are clearly late additions. They make reference to the Sākamedha rite encountered also in VII.56.14, the last of the Four-monthly rituals described in middle Vedic texts. In verse 9 the Maruts are called "descendants of the scorcher" (*sā́ṃtapana*), in verse 10 "sharers of the House-offering" (*gṛ́hamedha*); at the Sākamedha the Maruts as Sāṃtapana receive an offering at midday, and in

the evening as Gr̥hamedha. The final verse (12), in a different meter, is dedicated to "Tryambaka," an epithet of Rudra. The Sākamedha ends with an oblation to Rudra Tryambaka.

1. Whom you safeguard, o gods, and whom you lead right up here,
   to him—o Agni, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Maruts—extend shelter.
2. With the help of you, o gods, on a favorable day the one who has sacrificed crosses over hatreds.
   He furthers his dwelling place, ex(tends) his great refreshments, who does ritual service to your liking.

3. Vasiṣṭha will certainly not neglect even the last of you:
   when our (soma) is pressed today, o Maruts, drink it avidly, all of you.
4. Your help in battles certainly does not desert him to whom you have granted it, o men.
   Your favor has turned here anew. Drive straightaway, you who desire to drink.

5. You of ardent generosity, drive here to drink the stalks.
   Here are the oblations for you, o Maruts. Because I have bestowed them, don't go somewhere else.
6. Sit here on our ritual grass and undertake to give us coveted goods.
   O unfailing Maruts, you will exhilarate yourselves here on the somian honey—Hail!

7. Surely even in secret they keep preening their bodies. The dark-backed geese have flown here.
   As a whole troop you have sat down all around me, like battle-lusty men, becoming exhilarated on the pressing.
8. O Maruts, whoever, being evilly angry at us and at cross-purposes, seeks to strike us, you good ones,
   may he be fastened to the fetters of deceit. With your most scorching stroke strike him.

9. You descendants of the scorcher, Maruts, enjoy this oblation here.
   (Come here) with your help, you who care for the stranger.
10. Come here, you sharers of the House-offering—Maruts, don't stay away—
    with your help, you of good drops.
11. Here, just here—you self-strong, sun-skinned poets—
    I will you (to come) here to (my) sacrifice, o Maruts.

12. We sacrifice to Tryambaka the fragrant, increaser of prosperity.
    Like a cucumber from its stem, might I be freed from death, not from deathlessness.

VII.60 (576) Mitra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The opening four verses describe the rising Sun, who watches over the good and evil that people do. As such, he is the agent of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, since they are the gods whose central character is to govern the actions of mortals. In verses 3–4 the poet blends the offerings that rise to the gods at dawn with the antelopes of the Sun that carry him aloft. These antelopes are "rich in ghee" (vs. 3), as the offerings would be. In verse 4 the "strengthening, honeyed ones" are primarily the offerings given to Mitra and Varuṇa, but juxtaposed to the Sun's ascent and to the description of his antelopes, they also become reflections of these antelopes, lifting the Sun to the heaven. In 4cd the Ādityas clear a path for the Sun, and this image leads to the principal theme of the succeeding verses and of the hymn itself—the ability of the Ādityas to lead even through difficult circumstances. The Ādityas keep away those who oppose the truths they embody (vs. 5), and they guide even those who may not understand their truths (vss. 6–7). The "unwinking, perceptive ones" in 7a might be the gods themselves, although they could also be the spies of Mitra and Varuṇa, who are described in similar ways (cf. VII.61.3, 5) and who would be present both in heaven and on earth (cf. VI.61.3).

If there is benefit in following the Ādityas, there is also danger in not doing so. The poet warns of the anger of the Ādityas (vs. 8), the hostility of Aryaman (vs. 9), the secret attack they can bring, and the hidden strength they possess (vs. 10). All this leaves the poet and his people "trembling" (vs. 10) before them. The sense of danger, either from those who do not follow the ways of the Ādityas or from not following those ways, is strongly articulated in the second half of the hymn. It is also here that the hymn designates Sudās, the king, as the special recipient of the Ādityas' protection and mercy (vss. 8, 9). This may point toward a *time* in which the king and his people were trying to find and to establish a settlement after the normal period of migration and battle, a time that might well be one of particular peril.

1. If today as you arise, o Sun, you who are free of offense will speak the
   truth [=that we are free of offense] to Mitra and Varuṇa,
   we would be (offenseless) before the gods, Aditi, and dear to you,
   Aryaman, as we sing.
2. O Mitra and Varuṇa, this very Sun, who draws the gaze of men, rises up
   over both [=standing and moving beings] on earth—
   the herdsman of everything, (both) the standing and the moving, seeing
   the straight and crooked (acts) among mortals.
3. He has harnessed from his abode his seven antelopes, which, rich in ghee,
   convey him, the Sun,

who, seeking you, o Mitra and Varuṇa, surveys your domains and the tribes (of men), like your herds.

4. The strengthening, honeyed ones [=offerings] belonging to you two have risen up, and the Sun has mounted the gleaming flood—
he for whom the Ādityas—Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa all together—clear his roads.
5. These are the avengers of much untruth, for they are Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa.
These have grown strong in the house of truth—the capable, undeceivable sons of Aditi.
6. These hard to deceive—Mitra, Varuṇa, (and Aryaman)—cause even the unperceptive man to perceive through their skills.
Fully knowing the resolve based on good perception, they lead by a good path even across narrow straits.
7. These unwinking, perceptive ones of heaven and of earth lead the unperceptive man.
Even in the onrush of a stream there is a ford. They will bring us across to the far shore of this peril.
8. Since Aditi, Mitra, and Varuṇa offer their welcome herdsmanlike protection to Sudās,
let us, securing our kith and kin under it, not do that which angers the gods, o overpowering ones.
9. By his libations he should ritually cleanse the altar of any double-dealing that deceives Varuṇa.
Let Aryaman with his hostilities avoid (him [=Sudās], creating) a wide world for Sudās, o you two bulls.
10. Because their fiery attack is even in secret and they are strong with hidden strength,
(we are) trembling in fear before you, bulls—by the greatness of your very skill, have mercy on us!
11. Who by sacrifice will gain your favor for his formulation at the winning of victory's prize and of the highest wealth,
his generous patrons will strive to overpower the battle fury of the outsider. They have made for themselves a wide and secure place for their dwelling.
12. This installation of the god [=Agni] to the fore has been made for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa.
Take us across all difficulties. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.61 (577) Mitra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Like the preceding hymn, with which it shares its final verse, this hymn begins with a description of the rising Sun, who here is the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa, watching over the good and evils deeds of humans. In verse 2 the rising Sun parallels the voice of the poet, who raises his hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa. And just as the Sun fills the worlds with light, Mitra and Varuṇa penetrate all the worlds and even go beyond them. Like kings who send their agents into the communities to note what their subjects are doing and saying, Mitra and Varuṇa also have spies who are everywhere (vs. 3).

The mention of these spies in verse 3 may help explain the most problematic verse in the hymn, verse 5. There are several ways to construe the verse: *ámūrā víśvā* could be vocative and nominative dual respectively, describing Mitra and Varuṇa as those who can never be fooled (so Geldner), but more likely they describe the *drúhaḥ* "deceptions" in 5c. As Oldenberg notes, grammatically dispersing the phrase *ámūrā víśvā(ḥ)... imā́ḥ* "all these who are never fooled" seems forced. But the idea that Mitra and Varuṇa themselves deceive has understandably given interpreters pause. Still, in X.109.4 Indra is said never to be deceived but himself deceiving (√*dabh*) and in the previous hymn, in VII.60.9c, Aryaman can bring "hostilities" against those who do not act rightly. The "deceptions" of Mitra and Varuṇa are probably their hidden spies. These spies are actually not seen and accordingly in this verse they are unidentified and hence verbally hidden. The verse even works a deception of its own, describing the spies in the feminine plural—*spáśaḥ* "spies" is masculine plural—and delaying the feminine term that stands for them, *drúhaḥ*, until pāda c.

1. Upward arises the eye of lovely appearance that belongs to you two gods,
   o Varuṇa—the Sun, who has extended himself.
   He who watches over all living beings marks the battle fury among
   mortals.
2. Truth-possessing, the far-famed inspired poet raises his thoughts forth to
   you, o Mitra and Varuṇa—
   he whose formulations you will help, o you of strong will, when you two
   will bring his autumns to fullness, as if by his will.
3. (You have reached) past the wide (midspace), past the earth, o Mitra and
   Varuṇa, past the high heaven aloft, o you who bring good gifts.
   You have placed your spies among the plants and among the clans,
   guarding unwinkingly against him who goes his own way.
4. I shall praise the institutes of Mitra and Varuṇa: in its greatness their
   unbridled power ever presses upon the two world-halves.

The months of those not sacrificing will pass without bringing heroes,
but he whose thoughts belong to the sacrifice will extend his settlement.

5. O you two bulls, all these of yours who are never fooled, among whom has been seen neither sign nor wonder—
(these, your) deceptions!—follow the untruths of men. There have not been secrets that cannot be perceived by you two.
6. I make the sacrifice great for you two with my acts of reverence; eagerly I call upon you two, Mitra and Varuṇa;
my new thoughts (go) forth to you to chant praise. They will enjoy these formulations created (by me)!
7. This installation of the god [=Agni] to the fore has been made for you two, Mitra and Varuṇa.
Take us across all difficulties. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.62 (578) Sūrya (1–3), Mitra and Varuṇa (4–6)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

As in the two previous hymns, the poet begins with the rising Sun, who shines down upon all the Ārya tribes and fills the heaven with his light and therefore becomes equal to heaven (vs. 1). The antelopes of the Sun carry him up, as do the praise songs as they rise, and from heaven the Sun witnesses the deeds of humans and attests to the Ādityas and Agni the innocence of the sacrificers (vs. 2). In verse 3 the poet asks that Varuṇa, Mitra, and Agni bring them the highest *arká*. The primary meaning of *arká* is "chant," and therefore the first idea is that these gods will inspire the chant of the sacrificers. But *arká* can carry a secondary meaning, "flame," a sense that is actualized here through the description of the gods as *candrá* "glittering" and by *arcís* "flame," the latter etymologically related to *arká* in this meaning. So like the Sun these gods will brighten themselves and also make bright the world of the sacrificers.

In verse 4 three gods—Heaven and Earth and Aditi, the mother of the Ādityas—are addressed in pāda a, but the remainder of ab refers only to two gods, Heaven and Earth. The poet continues to address two gods in verse 5, revealing only in the last pāda that the two gods are Mitra and Varuṇa. Finally, in the last verse the poet matches the image of light spreading over earth and heaven that was introduced in the first verse with the "wide space" across generations and the freedom of movement that Mitra and Varuṇa will offer.

Although the poet does not continue the strategy through the whole hymn, verses 1–2 have a striking number of sound repetitions. Thus 1d is *krátvā kr̥táḥ*

súkr̥taḥ kartŕ̥bhir bhūt, 2b *ebhí stómebhir etaśébhir évaiḥ*, and 2d *(á)nāgaso aryamṇé agnáye ca*. In verse 2 the sound repetitions underscore the tie between the Sun's animals and the praise songs and the bonds between Aryaman, Agni, and the innocent sacrificers.

1. The Sun has raised up his flames aloft, (facing) all the many tribes of Manu's sons.
   Radiating, he is visible as the equal to heaven. Created by their will, he has become well created by his creators.
2. O Sun, you have arisen in front facing us with these praise songs, with your coursers in their usual ways.
   You will proclaim us to Mitra and Varuṇa to be without offense, and to Aryaman and to Agni.
3. Let those possessing the truth—Varuṇa, Mitra, and Agni—clear the way to a thousand ritual gifts for us.
   Let the glittering ones offer us the highest chant [/flame]. Being praised, let them fulfill our wish.
4. O Heaven and Earth, o Aditi, you two should rescue us, (and so also should) those good birth-givers [=the gods] who gave birth to you two, o you two on high.
   Let us not be in the anger of Varuṇa or of Vāyu, nor in that of Mitra, most dear to men.
5. Stretch forth your arms for us to live. Sprinkle our pasture-land with ghee.
   Make us famed among the people, you two youths. Hear these my invocations, Mitra and Varuṇa.
6. Now let Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman provide wide space for ourselves and for our offspring.
   Let all our paths be easy to travel. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.63 (579) Sūrya (1–5ab), Mitra and Varuṇa (5cd–6)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Even more than the other hymns in the sequence VII.60–65, this hymn concentrates on the rising Sun. Here the Sun becomes the visible sign and the embodiment of the Ādityas. He is the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa (vs. 1) and *subhága* "bringing good fortune," like Bhaga, the god Fortune (vs. 1). But the Sun is especially like the god Savitar, the "Impeller." He is *prasavitár*, who "impels forth" (vs. 2); he takes the form of Savitar (vs. 3); and the people are impelled (*prasūtá*) by him (vs. 4). The god Savitar especially drives living beings to their homes at night, so here the

Sun assumes the complementary function of impelling them forth to their various daytime tasks.

The Sun is also the fire common to all the Vedic peoples. He is the "common support of the sons of Manu," creating a cultural or even possibly a political unity among them (vs. 1) and the "common wheel" (vs. 2), whose turning commences the day and the activities of the day. Representing Savitar, the Sun upholds the "common institute" (vs. 3) that governs all the peoples.

In verse 5b, the images of the herd and the falcon are puzzling. If the herd belongs to the frame as we have translated the verse, then it is probably the gods whom the Sun follows as they clear a road for him across the sky. On the other hand, if the herd is part of the comparison, then a hungry falcon might follow a herd of cattle because the cattle would attract birds, which could become its prey. Of course it is also possible, even likely, that the poem legitimately allows both interpretations. See also IV.38.5, in which there are like uncertainties.

1. Upward he rises, bringing good fortune and with his gaze on everything,
 the common support of the sons of Manu—the Sun,
 the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa, the god who has rolled together the shades
 of darkness like hides.
2. And upward he rises, the one impelling the peoples forth—the great,
 undulating beacon of the Sun,
 about to turn the common wheel that Etaśa pulls, harnessed on the
 yoke poles.
3. Gleaming forth from the lap of the Dawns, he rises upward, being
 celebrated by the husky-voiced singers.
 He appears to me as the god Savitar, who does not violate the common
 institute.
4. The bright ornament of heaven, having a broad gaze, rises upward—
 he whose goal is in the far distance, gleaming as he crosses over
 (toward it).
 Now the peoples, impelled forth by the Sun, will go toward their goals,
 and they will perform their tasks.
5. Where the immortals have made a way for him, he follows after the herd
 [=the gods?], flying like a falcon.
 When the sun has risen, we would worship you two with our acts of
 reverence and with our oblations, o Mitra and Varuṇa.
6. Now let Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman provide wide space for ourselves
 and for our offspring.
 Let all our paths be easy to travel. – Do you protect us always with your
 blessings.

VII.64 (580) Mitra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a prayer to the Ādityas for rain, as the poet makes explicit in verse 2cd. Geldner rightly sees the likelihood of a double reading of verse 1. The "cloaks of ghee" are butter offerings given to Mitra and Varuṇa, but at the same time they are rain that the Ādityas send in response to these offerings. So also in verse 4, the "ghee" that Mitra and Varuṇa should sprinkle on the composer of this hymn is rain. As a result of the rain, the dwellings of the sacrificers will prosper (4cd, 5c).

As often, the middle verse of the hymn is more cryptic than the others. Mitra and Varuṇa are addressed, as is the *devó aryáḥ*, translated here the "civilizing god" and referring to Aryaman. The point of mentioning Aryaman in such an indirect way is to create a verbal connection between the *devó aryáḥ* and the *arí,* the "stranger" in pāda c. An *arí* is an outsider, but one who belongs to the Vedic peoples and follows the customs of the Āryas. The point is that such a stranger will recognize the sacrificers as those who prosper because they follow the Ādityas and the ways of the Āryas and will honor them as *sudā́saḥ* "good givers," generous people. But Sudās is also the Bharata king who figures very prominently in the Vasiṣṭha hymns, and, inescapably, this designation must recall him. That is to say, even one who belongs to another Vedic tribe will see that the sacrificers are "Sudāses" or like Sudās, the great king, in their prosperity and generosity.

In verse 4, the "chariot seat" is the seat of honor here at the sacrifice, which is implicitly imagined as a chariot, as often elsewhere.

1. You two who are masters of space in heaven and on earth—to you they should give cloaks of ghee.
   Mitra, well-born Aryaman, and King Varuṇa of strong rule enjoy our oblation.
2. O you two kings, herdsmen of great truth, lords of the rivers, and rulers—travel here to this place.
   Send down refreshment to us and rain from heaven, o Mitra and Varuṇa, you of lively drops.
3. Then let Mitra, Varuṇa, and the civilizing god [=Aryaman] lead us forth by the most successful paths,
   so that a (civilized) stranger will thereby speak of us as "good givers."
   With gods as our herdsmen, might we find exhilaration by your refreshment!
4. Who will fashion for you two this chariot seat by his thought and who will make and sustain a high vision—
   sprinkle him with ghee, Mitra and Varuṇa. Bring satisfaction to our good dwellings, o kings.

5. This praise song, o Varuṇa, o Mitra, has been offered to each of you, like the gleaming soma to Vāyu.
   Give help to our insights. Awaken the ways to plenty. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.65 (581) Mitra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is similar in theme and phrasing to the preceding hymn, with which it also shares the final verse. It too is fundamentally a prayer for rain to Mitra and Varuṇa. There is no reference to Aryaman, although there is an indirect reference to his function as god of customs in the poet's description of Mitra and Varuṇa as *aryá* "civilizing" (vs. 2a). Verse 4 most explicitly states the theme of the hymn. In pāda a the poet offers the gods oblations, which include ghee and other ritual libations, and in b he asks for these in return, though in the form of rain. In c we read *váram* "wish" twice, once in the phrase *práti… váram* "at your wish," referring to the wish of the gods for oblations, and second in the phrase *váram ā́… pr̥ṇītám* "fill our wish" for rain. Thus in both ab and cd, the poet first refers to the desire of the gods and then his own desire.

The translation below also takes *víśva* "everyone" twice in the translation of verse 1, which, like the first verse of the preceding hymn, offers a possible double reading. According to the translation below, in pāda d Mitra and Varuṇa move "upon the course of everyone," that is, they follow or accompany the actions of all beings. But *yā́man* "course" can also mean "entreaty," and if construed with *ācít* "attentive," the line could also mean, "moving on the course of everyone, attentive to the entreaty of everyone."

1. When the sun has risen, I call upon you two with hymns, upon Mitra and upon Varuṇa of purified skill,
   you two, who possess imperishable and preeminent lordship, you two moving upon the course of everyone, attentive to the entreaty of everyone.
2. Because you two are lords of the gods and you two are civilizing, make our dwellings to be nourishing.
   Might we reach you two, Mitra and Varuṇa, where heaven and earth will swell and also the days.
3. These two have many fetters, are bonds for untruth, and are hard to overcome for the cheating mortal.
   By your path of truth, Mitra and Varuṇa, we would cross over difficulties, as (we would) waters by a boat.

4. (Come) here to the enjoyment of our oblation, Mitra and Varuṇa!
 Sprinkle our pasture with ghee, with refreshments.
 At your wish, in this place and for our people, fill our wish from the
 beloved heavenly water.
5. This praise song, o Varuṇa, o Mitra, has been offered to each of you, like
 the gleaming soma to Vāyu.
 Give help to our insights. Awaken the ways to plenty. – Do you protect
 us always with your blessings.

VII.66 (582) Mitra and Varuṇa (1–3, 17–19), Ādityas (4–13), Sūrya (14–16)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
19 verses: gāyatrī 1–9, 17–19, arranged in tr̥cas; br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī 10–15, arranged in pragāthas; puraüṣṇih 16

This hymn consists of eight metrical units of various meters. The first three are three gāyatrī tr̥cas, followed by three br̥hatī/satobr̥hatī strophes and one more gāyatrī tr̥ca. The hymn then concludes with a final, single puraüṣṇih verse. Despite its metrical complexity, the hymn sustains its basic themes throughout. Once again this is a hymn recited at sunrise, and indeed the phrase "at the rising of the sun" occurs at the beginning of three of its seven strophes (vss. 4, 7, 12). Also the beginning of fourth strophe (vs. 14) contains a variant of the phrase, the final tr̥ca starts (vs. 16) with a reference to the rising of the sun, and the pragātha beginning at verse 10 opens with a mention of the sun. Therefore of the hymn's eight units, only the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3), which establishes Mitra and Varuṇa as the dedicands of the hymn, and the final summary invitation to Mitra and Varuṇa lack a reference to the rising sun in its first verse. This repeated mention of the rising sun is a structuring device that unifies the hymn despite the diversity of its meter. Thematically, the rise and movement of the Sun across the heavens becomes the representation of the Ādityas' lordship extending across the world.

The actions of the Ādityas are also linked with the words and action of the ritual. This theme is introduced at the outset, when they are described as *sudákṣa* "of good skill" and the children of Dakṣa, the embodiment of skill and specifically sacrificial skill (vs. 2). The gods sustain "the three divisions" (vs. 10), a phrase that likely refers both to the divisions of the world (earth, midspace, and heaven), and to the divisions of the ritual (the three soma-pressings). They also sustain the divisions of time (vs. 11): the year, month, and day, but also the sacrifice and the night, a division that could refer to the sacrificial rites by day and the continuation of the rites across the night. The Ādityas "impel" (√*sū*)—a word connected with Savitar, of course, and therefore with the Ādityas—the sacrificers and thereby bring their rituals success and take their worshipers "across difficult straits" (vss. 4–5).

1. Let our thunderous praise song go forth with our reverence to Mitra and Varuṇa,
the two powerfully born,
2. Whom the gods uphold, the two of good skill whose father is Skill,
whose greatness (goes) forward to lordship.
3. You two, protectors of our dependents and of our bodies, o Varuṇa—
bring the insights of (us) singers to success, o Mitra.

4. If today, at the rising of the sun, the one free of offense [=the Sun], Mitra, Aryaman,
Savitar, and Bhaga will each impel (us),
5. Let this dwelling be one that ritually pursues (the gods) well. Now, o you bringing good drops, (let those go) forth on their course
who take us across difficult straits.
6. And the sovereign kings and Aditi, who (are masters) of the undeceivable command,
as kings are masters of (all that is) great.

7. At the rising of the sun I will sing to you two, to Mitra and Varuṇa,
to Aryaman, who cares for the stranger.
8. With longing for wealth and gold, this thought is for power that knows no wolf;
this inspired (thought) is for winning wisdom.
9. Together with our patrons, might we be these, o god Varuṇa, o Mitra:
might we receive refreshment and the sun.

10. Many are they whose eye is the Sun, whose tongue is Agni, who strengthen through the truth,
who sustain the three divisions by their insights, all (the divisions) by their encompassing powers.
11. They who divided the year, the month, then the day; the sacrifice and the night, then the verse—
as kings, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman have attained an unobtainable rule.

12. Today for you, at the rising of the sun, with our hymns we will conceive
what Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman solemnly declare. You are charioteers of truth!
13. (You) possessing the truth, born of the truth, and strengthening through the truth, (you) terrifying haters of untruth—
might we be in the most protective favor of you, o men, and might also our patrons.

14. This lovely marvel [=the Sun] arises on the curve of heaven,
when the swift god Etaśa conveys him, right for everyone to gaze upon.

15. For his easy passage, the seven sisters—the antelopes on his chariot—
 convey the Sun—
 the lord of each one, head by head, and of the moving and the
 standing—through the whole dusky realm altogether.

16. That eye, fixed in place by the gods, blazing as it ascends,
 might we see for a hundred autumns. Might we live for a hundred
 autumns!
17. With your poetic arts, o undeceivable ones, travel here in brilliance,
 o Varuṇa
 and Mitra, in order to drink the soma.
18. From heaven through your domains, o Varuṇa and Mitra, you who are
 without deception—travel here.
 Drink the soma, thrusting yourselves toward it.

19. Travel here, Mitra and Varuṇa, enjoying our offering, o noble men.
 Drink the soma, o you who strengthen through the truth.

VII.67 (583) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

The opening verses of this hymn describe the early morning advent of the Aśvins, when the sacrificial fire is kindled and the dawn becomes visible (vs. 2). They also present problems of translation and interpretation that turn on the identity of the Aśvins' chariot. Elsewhere the Aśvins' chariot can be the sacrifice or the hymns of the sacrifice that bring the Aśvins to the rite. Therefore, the chariot in verse 1a is the vehicle bringing the Aśvins. In 1c "that which" the poet recites and "that which" serves as a messenger to awaken the Aśvins is the praise song, now become the Aśvins' chariot carrying the Aśvins to the rite. In verse 4 there is no explicit mention of the chariot, but there is a complex ellipsis in 4a, which lacks both subject and verb. The gapped subject may be the chariot, but again the chariot as the hymn that seeks the Aśvins.

The hymn itself continues to be the focus of the poet in verses 5–6. In verse 5 he calls upon the Aśvins to advance his insight so that it will win gain for the sacrificers. While the poet previously mentioned the chariotry directly, here he refers to the hymn using the language of competition and prizewinning appropriate for a chariot. In verse 7 the poet also speaks of the "treasure," the soma, which is offered to the Aśvins along with his hymn, and he shifts attention from his "thought," which he offers to the Aśvins in the form of his hymn (vs. 1), to the Aśvins' thought, which he hopes will not be hostile to the sacrificers. In the final two verses the poet appeals to the Aśvins to support his patrons, whose generosity and bounty he celebrates.

Structurally, the hymn forms a ring, since the infinitive *jarádhyai* "to awaken" and the verb *ájīgar* "he has awakened" in the first verse are answered in the last verse by the imperative *járatam* "awaken!" However, while the translation of the *ájīgar* is secure, the interpretation of neither the infinitive nor the imperative is certain. The form *jarádhyai* is a hapax in the R̥gveda, and it is not clear whether it is transitive or intransitive and, if transitive, who is being "awakened." In the last verse, *járatam* might be from same root, although it also might be from a different root and mean "make old!"

1. To become awake in response to your chariot, o you two lords of men,
   with a thought worthy of the sacrifice accompanying offerings,
   I recite (to you) here, like a child to his parents, that which, like a
   messenger, has awakened you two, o holy ones.
2. Agni has blazed up, being kindled among us, and the very borders of
   darkness have become visible.
   In the east Dawn's beacon has come into view—(the beacon) of Heaven's
   daughter, which is being born for glory.
3. Now the good Hotar attends upon you with his praise songs as he recites,
   o Aśvins, Nāsatyas.
   Journey this way along many pathways with your sun-finding,
   goods-bearing chariot.
4. Now, seeking you, o honey-bearing Aśvins, your (chariot carries)
   you, when, seeking good things, I call upon you two at the
   soma-pressing.
   Let your stout horses carry you here. You will drink the well-pressed
   honey drinks among us.
5. O gods, Aśvins, bring forward my insight—not falling short, seeking
   good things—to win gain.
   Help all the forms of plenty here in the competition for the prize. Do as
   you are able for us with your abilities, o you lords of abilities.
6. Help us in these insights, Aśvins. Let our child-producing seed be
   abundant.
   Propagating ourselves in kith and kin, possessing good riches, we would
   go to our godly pursuit of you two.
7. This very treasure, like a promissory portion for a companion, is set
   down here for you, o honey-bearing ones, and given by us.
   With thought free of anger, journey this way, to eat our oblation among
   the clans of Manu's sons.
8. In your single, joint trek, o energetic ones, your chariot encompasses the
   seven flowing streams.
   They do not become exhausted—these your surpassing (horses) of
   powerful presence, which, yoked by the gods on their yoke-poles, carry
   you two.

9. Be unfailing for the bounteous ones, who speed their gift of bounty with wealth,
   who extend their relationships by their liberal gifts, mingling their bounties of cattle and of horses.
10. Now, hear my call, youthful ones. Journey the course that brings refreshment, Aśvins.
   Grant riches and awaken our patrons! – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.68 (584) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
9 verses: virāj 1–7, triṣṭubh 8–9

In its first four verses the hymn opens with an invitation to the Aśvins to come to the sacrifice in the early morning and to receive the soma offerings being made to them. In verse 3 the Aśvins come with the daughter of the Sun, Sūryā, which marks this as a morning hymn (cf. also vs. 9). In verse 4c the *vípra* "inspired poet" is likely the reciter of the hymn, but in 4ab the pressing stone also sounds as it crushes the soma stalks, and therefore it too could be the poet in the latter half of the verse. The stone prepares the soma offerings, so the reference to the oblations in 4c would also be appropriate to it.

Then in the second set of four verses (vss. 5–8) the poet briefly describes great deeds of the Aśvins and four of the past figures whom they helped. In verses 6 and 8 the poet mentions the offerings of Cyavāna *havirdā́* "the giver of offerings" and their summons (*hūyámāna*) by Śayu, words that echo the present offerings (*havís*, 2b) and the calls to the Aśvins (*hávana*, 2c).

Verse 5 alludes to the story of Atri, who was rescued from the heat of a pit oven by the Aśvins and who received sustenance from them. That is to say, the Aśvins rescued him with food and from becoming treated like food. In this verse the poet refers to the "sustenance" (*bhójana*) and the "relief" (*omán*) Atri receives. Similarly, in I.116.8 the Aśvins give Atri "nourishment together with solid food" (*pitumátīm ū́rjam*) and in 118.7 they give "nourishment" and "relief" (*ū́rjam omā́nam*). Geldner suggests that Atri receives from the Aśvins an elixir that restores him to life, but these descriptions suggest more mundane gifts of food and drink that saved Atri from starvation.

In verse 7 Bhujyu's evil-intentioned companions include his father, Tugra, who left him behind (I.116.3, 119.8). But somehow the Aśvins changed Tugra's mind and rescued Bhujyu through Tugra, who, as the description *yuvā́ku* "seeking you" implies, was a worshiper of the Aśvins (cf. I.117.14). In verse 8 the poet refers to the Aśvins' willingness to come to the rescue even of a "wolf," of a bad person, who is "starving" (*jásamāna*). This applies to Śayu, since he was once

"starving" (*jásuri*, I.116.22), but the Aśvins rescued him by making his sterile cow give milk.

In the final verse (vs. 9), which is reminiscent of the first verse of the previous hymn, the poet alludes to the cow that the Aśvins swell in verse 8. Geldner understands the cow to represent the gifts that the poet receives from the sacrificer, but more likely it is the poem itself, which will yield good things for the poet. Note that the poem is the focus of 9ab, which refers to "good hymns" and "good thoughts." The verb *jarate*, translated here as "awakens," can also mean "sings," and the hymn's audience would surely have been aware of the double sense.

1. Beautiful Aśvins, wondrous ones, journey here with your good horses,
   enjoying the songs of him seeking you
   and the oblations brought before you. Pursue our (offerings).
2. The exhilarating soma stalks have come forth for you. As is right, come
   to pursue my offering
   across the calls of the stranger. Hear our (calls).
3. O Aśvins, your chariot swift as thought rises forth across the airy spaces,
   bringing hundredfold help,
   speeding to us, o you who bring Sūryā as goods.
4. When this stone—seeking the gods, pressing the soma—speaks aloft to
   you two,
   the inspired poet should turn you enchanting ones here by the
   oblations.
5. Since you now have brilliant sustenance (for him), you two keep away the
   intense (heat) for Atri,
   who will receive relief from you, since he is dear to you.
6. And again, Aśvins, this is your recompense to Cyavāna, the giver of
   offerings, who was growing old:
   that you two lay an ageless appearance on (him).
7. And again, Aśvins, his companions of evil intent abandoned this Bhujyu
   in the middle of the sea.
   His enemy [=Tugra], who seeks you, will rescue him.
8. Do as you are able, even on behalf of a wolf that is worn out, and listen
   to Śayu as you are called—
   you who have swelled the fertile cow like waters—even the barren cow—
   by your able power, Aśvins, by your abilities.
9. This praise-poet here awakens with good hymns, rousing himself at the
   beginning of the dawns, bringing good thoughts.
   The fertile cow makes him grow strong with her refreshing drink, with
   her milk. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.69 (585) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn is dominated by the chariot of the Aśvins and the theme of the journey of the Aśvins. The poet opens with the chariot (*rátha*) and refers to it, often explicitly, in every verse. In verse 1 the poet describes their "golden chariot," whose brilliance reflects the morning light that accompanies its advent. The final pāda of the verse takes an interesting turn. The chariot is first called *voḷhár* "conveyor," a term that ordinarily refers to the chariot driver (as in I.144.3d, VI.64.3d, VII.2.35c) or the horse that pulls a chariot (IX.81.2b, 96.15d, 112.4a). But here and in the similar pāda VII.71.4a, it describes the chariot itself, attributing agency to it. But then the poet also calls—or appears to call—the chariot *nŕ̥pati* "lord of men," which should describe the Aśvins themselves, as it does in VII.71.4. Geldner suggests that it could be a *luptopamā*, a comparison in which the particle of comparison has been omitted: "(wie) ein Fürst." Renou (*EVP* XVI: 48) describes the figure as a sort of hypallage caused by the juxtaposition *rátho nr̥patī* in VII.71.4. Renou is likely right that the pāda responds to VII.71.4, but it rather appears to be a semantic expansion of the chariot so that it includes or rather becomes the horses that pull it and the drivers who direct it. Also in verse 3 the chariot again takes the role of a groom, "clasping the bride," who is being carried on the chariot to her marriage. Behind this semantic expansion of the chariot, if that is what is occurring, may be the image of the Aśvins' chariot as the sacrifice itself. Note that the chariot is described as "having tracks of ghee" (vs. 1c) and "three chariot-boxes" (vs. 2b), corresponding to the three soma-pressings. The chariot is not just the sacrifice, however. As usual, it remains the chariot that brings the Aśvins to the sacrifice, as well as being the sacrifice, at least in these opening verses.

The theme of the journey of the Aśvins is marked by verbal derivatives of √*yā* "journey," which appear in every verse except verses 4 and 7. These two verses refer to the great deeds of the Aśvins: how they brought the daughter of the Sun to her marriage, how they rescued Atri from the heat of a pit oven, and how they saved Bhujyu from the sea. The Aśvins' chariot and thereby the theme of journeying are involved in all of these rescues.

1. Let your golden chariot, ever pressing upon the two world-halves,
   journey here with those bulls, your horses—
   the (chariot) with tracks of ghee, gleaming at its wheel-rims, the driver
   of refreshments, the lord of men with prizewinning mares.
2. Spreading over the five lands, yoked by thought, let it with its three
   chariot-boxes journey here—
   (the chariot) by which you two go to the clans serving the gods, as you
   set your journey toward any direction, Aśvins.

3. You two glorious ones possessing good horses—journey this way. O wondrous ones, you will drink the honeyed treasure.
   Clasping the bride to itself, your chariot presses upon the boundaries of heaven with its tracks.
4. The young woman—the daughter of the Sun—chose your glory at the decisive turn.
   When by your abilities you help him [=Atri], serving the gods, his vital force evades the heat by your relief.
5. O charioteers, this your chariot, which, having been harnessed at the dawning of the ruddy light, journeys around its course—
   by it convey to us luck and life at the breaking of dawn, at this sacrifice, Aśvins.
6. O you two fine men, like two thirsting buffaloes toward lightning, journey today toward *our* pressings,
   for in many places (people) call upon you two with their thoughts. Let not the others seeking the gods [=rival sacrificers] hold you down.
7. You two brought Bhujyu, struck down into the sea, up from the flood by your unfailing
   winged ones, which neither tire nor falter, when you were rescuing him by your wondrous powers, Aśvins.
8. Now, hear my call, youthful ones. Journey the course that brings refreshment, Aśvins.
   Grant riches and awaken our patrons! – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.70 (586) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: jagatī

In the last verse the poet calls the attention of the Aśvins to his hymn, calling it "intricate" or "well-twisted" (*suvr̥ktí*). He is quite right: his hymn is complex, since it presents metaphors of unclear reference and ellipses of uncertain interpretation. Such intricacy is attractive to gods like the Aśvins, and the purpose of the poet is to get the attention of the Aśvins by means of the hymn and to cause them to take notice of the offerings and other elements of the sacrifice so that they will be present at it.

In verse 1 the poet summons the Aśvins to take their place at the sacrifice, but 1cd, in which he describes the coming of the Aśvins, can be variously interpreted. In 1c something "stood" when the Aśvins took their place. We have suggested that this is the sacrificial fire kindled in the early morning, but other interpreters have offered other reasonable possibilities: the hot milk offered to the Aśvins (Oldenberg, Renou [*EVP* XVI: 49]) or the liquid offerings more generally (Geldner), the vessel

for the hot milk (Oldenberg), the "good favor" mentioned in verse 2a (Renou), or the place itself (Geldner, Velankar [1963]). Of these, the gharma or hot milk offering, which is mentioned in 2b, is the strongest possibility, and of course, the suppression of the subject in 1cd might have allowed hearers to recall several or all of these things that welcome the Aśvins.

In verse 3 the poet shifts attention to the rewards that the Aśvins will bring. The sacrificer hopes to find prosperity for the sacrificer from the rivers, plants, and clans, among which the Aśvins find a place, over which they sit "at the peak of the mountain"—in heaven perhaps? In verse 4a the "plants and the waters" recall the rivers, plants, and clans of verse 3 and verbally connect the two verses, even though the poet again shifts the theme back to the sacrifice being offered to the Aśvins. Here the waters and plants represent sacrificial libations and offerings. In 4b it is not clear what are the "harness cords" (*yogyā́*). They might be rites or offerings (especially the hot milk offering), or hymns. That is, they are elements of the sacrifice of one kind or another. Whatever these cords are, the image carries forward the description of the Aśvins in 2cd as "well-harnessed" horses and therefore should represent what attaches the Aśvins to the sacrifice. In 4cd the Aśvins reward the present sacrificers while keeping in mind the ancient ones. The present sacrifices are the equal to the ones of the past and therefore deserve the reward of the Aśvins.

In the last verses the poet becomes more straightforward in calling the Aśvins' attention to his hymn, his "formulations," which he has sent out in search of them (vs. 7), and to the sacrifice which stands ready for them (vs. 6).

1. Come to us, Aśvins, who grant all desires: this has been proclaimed as your place on earth.
   Having prosperity on its back like a prizewinning horse, it [=the fire?] stood up when you two sat down here as if (sitting) upon your womb to remain steadfast.
2. The most delightful favor clings to you two. In the house of Manu has been heated the hot milk
   that carries you, having been harnessed like a pair of well-harnessed swift steeds, across the seas and rivers,
3. (Across) the places that you two have taken for yourselves, Aśvins, among the exuberant (rivers) from heaven, among the plants, and among the clans—
   (you two) sitting down at the peak of the mountain, (you two) bringing refreshment to the pious man.
4. O gods, delight in the plants and waters when you will take on the harness cords [=the ritual acts?] of our seers.
   While granting many treasures to us, you two have kept in view the ancient generations.
5. Even though you have heard many, Aśvins, you look upon the formulations of our seers.

At your wish, journey forth according to our wish for the sake of our people. Let your most delightful favor be for us.

6. Our sacrifice, battle-ready with its offerings and (newly) created formulations, will become yours, Nāsatyas.
   Journey forth to Vasiṣṭha according to his wish. These formulations are being chanted for you two.
7. Here is the inspired thought, here the song, Aśvins—take pleasure in this intricate (hymn), o bulls.
   These formulations have gone, seeking you. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.71 (587) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

In its final verse this hymn repeats the last verse of the previous hymn, and as that verse says, it too is an intricate one (*suvr̥ktí*). The first verse marks this as an early-morning hymn. Since the ruddy light of early dawn is elsewhere associated with the ruddy cattle, the poet echoes that connection by describing the horses and cattle that the Aśvins bring. There is also a second possible reading: the two compounds *áśvāmaghā[ḥ] gómaghā[ḥ]* "having bounties of horses, bounties of cattle" could be nominative plurals as well as duals and be taken as proleptic adjectives modifying the 1st-person "we." This grammatical ambiguity can imply that the horses and cattle that the Aśvins bring will become the horses and cattle that we will have.

In verses 1–2 the Aśvins are asked also for rescue from enemies, want, and disease. In verses 3–4 the poet then turns especially to the chariot of the Aśvins, and, as often, the chariot is linked to the sacrifice itself. In 3c its horses are "in the harness of truth," that is, joined to the hymns and even to the rites, which may also be expressions of truth. The chariot is also *syū́magabhasti*, an elusive hapax. Geldner among others connects *gábhasti* "hands" to the rays of the sun, but there is no clear instance of such a use elsewhere in the R̥gveda. We propose, therefore, that the hands, which normally hold reins, have themselves become the reins (*syū́man*) of the chariot because they are the hands of the priests, who control the ritual. In verse 4 the analysis and reference of *viśvápsnya*, perhaps "containing all milk," are obscure. Geldner wonders whether the word might describe the praise hymn or Agni. The gharma vessel suggested here is uncertain at best. Verse 5 then returns to the Aśvins' ability to save from danger by describing four great acts of rescue. The last, the rescue of Jāhuṣa, is the least familiar and can be only tentatively reconstructed. The best suggestion is that of Oldenberg, who says that by combining verse 5d and I.116.20cd we can get the following: Jāhuṣa was trapped by his enemies is a wild, rocky area, but the Aśvins brought him out and set him down on light, soft soil.

1. Night recedes from her sister Dawn. The dark leaves behind the path to the ruddy.
   We would call upon you, having bounties of horses, bounties of cattle. By day and during the night keep the arrow away from us.
2. Journey to the pious mortal, conveying what is desirable by your chariot, Aśvins.
   By day and during the night keep thirst and affliction from us, o you rich in honey. You two should deliver us.
3. Let your bulls [=horses], showing us favor, turn your chariot here at the nearest dawn.
   Convey here your (chariot) bearing good things, for which the hands (of the priests?) are its reins, with its horses in the harness of truth, Aśvins.
4. The chariot that is the conveyor for you, o lords of men, having three chariot-boxes, bearing good things, journeying at dawn—
   by this (chariot) journey here to us, Nāsatyas, when what contains all milk [=the hot-milk vessel?] goes to you.
5. You two released Cyavāna from old age. You brought a swift horse to Pedu.
   You recovered Atri from difficulty and darkness. You set Jāhuṣa down on soft (soil).
6. Here is the inspired thought, here the song, Aśvins—take pleasure in this intricate (hymn), o bulls.
   These formulations have gone, seeking you. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.72 (588) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn is marked by the repeated invitations to the Aśvins to "journey here" (*ā́… yātam*, vss. 1, 2, and 5), which create a ring of the hymn's beginning and end. The urgent pleas that the Aśvins come here to this place, to this sacrifice and not to another, is reinforced by other words meaning "near" or "this way" (*arvā́k*, 2a) and "here" (*áchā*, 3d). Only verse 4 counters by opening with *ví*, here translated "forth," but more exactly signifying "away, apart." This verse shifts the attention to the spreading light of dawn (pādas a, c), which is matched in pāda d by the spreading light of the sacrificial fires and in b by the poetic formulations rising from the singers. The last verse joins the expansiveness of verse 4 to the invitation to the Aśvins by describing the four directions in which the Aśvins are present and from which they can come to the sacrifice at the center.

The four directions and the implicit center in verse 4 are reflected in the "wealth belonging to the five peoples" (vs. 5c), that is, the wealth belonging to all the Vedic clans and tribes. This wish also suggests that this hymn is recited on behalf of one who sees himself, his tribe, or his clan at the center of the Vedic peoples. The Vasiṣṭha poet is not shy about pointing to his family's connection to the center either, since he speaks of the familial formulations that "awaken" in order to bring the Aśvins (vs. 3ab).

1. Journey here, Nāsatyas, by your much gleaming chariot filled with cattle, filled with horses.
   All your teams accompany you, having beautified your bodies with your eagerly sought glory.
2. Journey here near to us by your chariot, Nāsatyas, along with the gods,
   for in you two are our ancestral companionships and common kinship. Be aware of this!
3. The praise songs of the Aśvins have awakened, also our family formulations and the Dawns, the goddesses.
   Seeking to gain these two world-halves, the inspired poet summons here the two holy Nāsatyas.
4. When the dawns break forth, Aśvins, the singers present to you their formulations.
   The god Savitar has fixed the radiant beam on high. The fires awaken aloft by kindling.
5. Journey here from the west or from the east, Nāsatyas, here from the south or from the north, Aśvins,
   here from everywhere with the wealth belonging to the five peoples. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.73 (589) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This short hymn is a summons to the Aśvins at the break of dawn, "the further shore of ... darkness." In verse 2 the poet calls the Aśvins' attention to Agni, the sacrificial fire and the Hotar of the sacrifice, who has been installed and stands ready to give the offerings to the Aśvins (2ab). All is ready for the Aśvins to consume the soma and the other offerings presented to them (2cd). In verse 3a the poet compares this sacrifice to a chariot speeding to the Aśvins. This image is answered in verse 4ab, which looks forward to the arrival of the *váhnī*, the "two chariot-horses." The term can refer to the horses of the Aśvins, but it might also refer to the Aśvins themselves as chariot-horses (cf. VIII.8.12). But in either case the idea is

that the fully prepared sacrifice races to the Aśvins, and the Aśvins, with or as fully equipped horses, race to the sacrifice. Again, in verse 4cd the poet draws attention to the ritual preparations made for the Aśvins and begs the Aśvins not to ignore his call and overlook his sacrifice. The last verse repeats the final verse of the preceding hymn. Here it is not so closely tied to the themes of the hymn, but it appropriately continues the plea to the Aśvins to travel from wherever they are to the sacrifice.

1. We have crossed to the further shore of this darkness, aiming our praise song as we seek the gods.
   My song calls to those having many wondrous powers, foremost among many, born in the distant past, to the immortal Aśvins.
2. Manu's own dear Hotar [=Agni] has been set down, he who sacrifices to the Nāsatyas and extols them.
   Eat of the honey [=soma], Aśvins, nearby to us. Bringing pleasing offerings, I call on you two at the ritual distributions.
3. We have sped the sacrifice, choosing among the paths. Take pleasure in this intricate (hymn), o bulls.
   Sent forth like an obedient servant, Vasiṣṭha has been roused for you two—(he) awakening in response to you with his praise songs.
4. These two chariot-horses—demon-smashing, fully equipped, having hard hooves—will come near our clan.
   The exhilarating (soma-)stalks have gathered together. Do not overlook us! Come with benevolence!
5. Journey here from the west or from the east, Nāsatyas, here from the south or from the north, Aśvins,
   here from everywhere with the wealth belonging to the five peoples. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.74 (590) Aśvins

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

The metrical alternation of bṛhatī and satobṛhatī structures this hymn into three pragāthas. All three mention food, most often the soma (vss. 2d, 3b) or other nourishment (vs. 5b) that the Aśvins receive. But the poet also describes the nourishment that the Aśvins give (vs. 2a). The last two verses connect these two kinds of nourishment in the climax of the hymn. In verse 5 the poet pairs the nourishment that his patrons follow as they approach the Aśvins as a complement to the "glory," their prominence in the social order, that they receive from the Aśvins in exchange. As a result these patrons become godlike—able to keep away "the wolf," which represents danger (cf. I.174.10 of Indra), and swelling "with swelling strength" (*śávasā śūśuvuḥ*; cf. VII.93.2 of Indra and Agni, VI.19.2 of Indra, and I.167.9 of the Maruts). The

ability of the Aśvins to go to every clan (vs. 1d) likewise parallels the "man-protectors" (*nṛpātā́raḥ*), or kings of the peoples, of the tribes consisting of clans.

1. Now the rituals of the day call upon you two, Aśvins, (at the dawning) of reddening dawn.
   Now have I called upon you for help, o you whose goods are powers, since you go to every clan.
2. You two have given brilliant sustenance, o you fine men. Hurry it to the liberal-minded one.
   You of one mind—stop your chariot nearby. Drink the soma-honey!

3. Journey here! Attend to us here! Drink of the honey, Aśvins!
   The milk has been milked out, o bulls whose goods are worth winning. Do not overlook us! Come here!
4. Your horses that fly to the home of the pious one, bringing you two—
   by these swift steeds journey here, o men, Aśvins, seeking us, o gods.

5. And then our patrons, going to the Aśvins, follow the nourishments.
   These two Nāsatyas will offer enduring glory to the generous ones and protection to us.
6. The man-protectors of the peoples, keeping the wolf away, who like chariots have journeyed forth—
   these men swell with their own swelling strength, and they dwell upon a good dwelling.

This group of seven Dawn hymns, VII.75–81, is the largest such collection devoted to this goddess in the Ṛgveda, though none of the hymns is very long (ranging from eight verses to three). The hymns share and recycle much of the same vocabulary and phraseology, and there are striking phonologically driven lexical responsions across hymns, which can unfortunately not be rendered in translation. What distinguishes the hymns from each other is their structure, which can be quite tightly organized and reinforced by verbal and grammatical markers. See, for example, VII.76.

VII.75 (591) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This Dawn hymn contains most of the usual Dawn themes: her immediate arrival, which awakens the world, her beauty and brightness, her daily journey, and, especially, her bestowal of riches on her praisers. The second half of verse 7 alludes to the Vala myth and the release of the dawn cows (see also the Aṅgiras reference in 1d); otherwise there are no mythological elements and no mention of other gods.

Although there are no particularly vivid images or striking phrases, the hymn is pleasingly composed and contains some well-crafted phonological figures that are unfortunately untranslatable.

1. Dawn, born in heaven, has dawned widely with her truth; revealing her own greatness, she has come here.
   She has uncovered the deceits, the disagreeable darkness; best of the Aṅgirases, she has awakened the paths.
2. For our great good faring take note of us today; o Dawn, for our great good fortune provide (for us).
   Establish for us bright, glorious wealth that seeks fame—o goddess among mortals, belonging to the sons of Manu.
3. These are the very beams of Dawn, who is lovely to see, the bright immortal beams that have come here.
   Generating the heavenly commandments, filling the midspaces, they have spread out.
4. This is the very one who, hitching herself up out of the distance, circles around the five settlements in a single day,
   looking upon the patterns of the peoples—the Daughter of Heaven, mistress of the world.
5. Possessed of prize mares, the maiden of the Sun who brings bright bounties has dominion over wealth, over goods.
   Praised by seers, awakening (the world), bounteous Dawn dawns, being hymned by the conveyors (of songs/oblations).
6. The ruddy, bright horses have become visible opposite, conveying the flashing Dawn.
   She drives, the resplendent one, with a chariot entirely ornamented; she establishes treasure for the person who distributes it.
7. True along with the true ones, great with the great, goddess with the gods, worshipful with the worshipful—
   she broke the fastnesses, she will give of the dawn-red (cows): the cows keep bellowing in response to Dawn.
8. Now, o Dawn, establish for us a treasure consisting of cows, of heroes, and of horses, providing much nourishment to us.
   Do not put our ritual grass to scorn among men. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.76 (592) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

A tightly structured hymn: the verbally responsive verses 3–4 are set within an inner ring (vss. 2, 5) with exact repetition in their final pādas (*ámardhanto vásubhiḥ . . .*). This

structure is reinforced by tense usage: the verbs in verses 1–2 are all augmented aorists referring to the immediate past of today's dawn; those in verses 5–7 are present indicatives and imperatives, stating general truths about the behavior of the dawns and the singers; while those in verses 3–4 are augmented imperfects (with one perfect) referring to the distant past, which gave rise to the present situation.

This structure defines verses 3–4 as an omphalos, and indeed these verses show clear omphalos features. Verse 3 contains the most intricate syntax in the hymn, while verse 4 concerns the Father's finding of "the hidden light" in the Vala cave, the primeval model for each new dawn. Verses 3 and 4 are in reverse chronological order: the Fathers find the hidden light of Dawn in verse 4, and verse 3 then describes the subsequent time with the periodic return of the Dawn, eagerly proceeding to the sacrifice as if to a lover, not moving slowly and reluctantly like a maiden leaving an assignation.

The exact repetition in the inner ring mentioned above is not a static feature. It participates in what we have termed "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006) and therefore provides forward movement by setting up a puzzle that is resolved later in the hymn. The adjective *ámardhantaḥ* "not negligent" modifies "paths" in verse 2. The combination seems discordant, although the hearer can construct a meaningful reading: paths that are not negligent are those, properly maintained and "set in order," that lead one where they are supposed to go. The application of "not negligent" to the priests in verse 5 is far easier to interpret: not negligent priests are those who properly perform the sacrifice every morning and therefore do not transgress the gods' commandments that regulate the proper functioning of the cosmos, since by ritual logic the sacrifice causes the new day to dawn. The phrase in verse 5 thus "repairs" the more jarring one in verse 2, but the jarring phrase in verse 2 also forced the hearers to formulate a more complex conception.

As so often, consideration of poetic structure gives depth to the apparently conventional expressions and images in this hymn, which recur in so many other descriptions of Dawn.

1. The immortal light belonging to all people—he who belongs to all men,
   god Savitar, has propped that up.
   In accordance with his will, the eye of the gods has been born. Dawn has
   revealed the whole world.
2. The paths leading to the gods have become visible to me—paths that are
   not negligent and are set in order by the good ones.
   The beacon of Dawn has appeared from the east. She has come here,
   facing west from her habitation.
3. Those were the days: the many days through which, at the rising of
   the sun,
   you became visible, o Dawn—faring forth thence toward the east-facing
   (sacrifice), like (a maiden) faring forth to her lover, not like one going
   (home) again.

4. Those were the feasting companions of the gods: the sage poets of old, provided with truth.
   The Fathers discovered the hidden light. With their mantras that come true, they generated the Dawn.
5. Come together in a common pen, they [=priests] act in unison; they do not marshal themselves in opposition.
   They do not transgress the commandments of the gods, they who are not negligent and are united with the good ones.
6. In response to you the Vasiṣṭhas reverently invoke you with praises, when, waking at dawn, they have praised you, well-portioned one.
   Leader of cows, mistress of prizes, dawn for us, o well-born Dawn. Be first awake.
7. She is the leader of largesse, of liberalities. Dawn, while dawning, is "squawked" to by the Vasiṣṭhas,
   as she establishes wealth of long fame in us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.77 (593) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Renou (*EVP* III: 95) calls this hymn a "pièce banale," a designation that seems hardly fair. Although it lacks the intricate patterning of the immediately preceding hymn, its simpler structure gives it a forward-moving urgency encoded in its deployment of verb forms. The first half of the hymn (vss. 1–3) opens with a perfect (*ruruce* "she has shone") but thereafter consists entirely of augmented aorists (like vss. 1–2 of VII.76), with *aroci* of 2d almost forming a ring with the opening perfect form, built to the same root (√*ruc*). There is an abrupt change of verbal mood in verse 4, with a cascade of imperatives in the next two verses (4–5). The grammatical person also changes: the constant 3rd person of verses 1–3 is succeeded by 2nd person in the rest of the hymn. Thus the first half of the hymn describes the immediate arrival of Dawn, and in the second the poet addresses a series of eager commands to Dawn, who has just appeared in front of him. Two features tie the hymn together grammatically: (1) the abundance of present participles modifying Dawn in both halves, though more common in the first; and (2) the constant use of Dawn as subject. Except for 1c and the first half of the final verse (6ab) Dawn is always the grammatical subject. A glance at other Dawn hymns in this series shows that this uniformity is unusual.

No doubt Renou's remark concerned the "content" of the hymn, and it is certainly true that there are no remarkable images or elaborate conceits. However, the

familiar depiction of Dawn as a lovely and ardent maiden is pleasing here, as it is elsewhere.

1. She has shone—up close like a young maiden, impelling every living thing forth to activity.
   (The time) has just come for Agni to be kindled by the sons of Manu. She has made light, pressing away the dark shades.
2. Facing all, she has arisen in full extension; wearing a luminous, gleaming garment, she has brightened.
   Golden in color, a sight lovely to see, mother of cows, leader of days, she has shone.
3. Well-portioned, conveying the eye of the gods, leading the bright horse lovely to see,
   Dawn has just been seen, decorated with (the sun's) rays, bringing brilliant bounties, projecting through all (the world).
4. Bringing valuable things nearby, dawn the foe into the distance; create for us broad pastureland and fearlessness.
   Keep hatred away; bring goods here; impel largesse for the singer, you bounteous one.
5. Radiate widely to us with your fairest radiances, goddess Dawn, lengthening our lifetime,
   imparting to us both refreshment and largesse in cattle, horses, and chariots, you who bring all valuables.
6. You whom the Vasiṣṭhas strengthen with their thoughts, o Daughter of Heaven, well-born Dawn,
   as that one place in us wealth high and lofty. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.78 (594) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is characterized by two "signature words": *práti* "in response to / opposite" (found in every verse but 4) and the present participle *vibhā́tī* "radiating widely" (vss. 3–5), words regularly found in other Dawn hymns. In fact, there is, until near the end, little novel about this hymn. The most noticeable feature until the end is that the middle verse (3) refers to the dawns in the plural, though they seem to be immediately present, while the other verses have singular Dawn.

But the most noteworthy aspect of the hymn is the striking hapax verb that opens the last half verse (5c): *tilvilāyádhvam*. This is a transparent denominative built to the adjective *tílvila* (V.62.7), but this only displaces the problem, as the meaning and derivation of this adjective are not at all clear, and its rhyming reduplicative

formation (*til-vil*) deviates markedly from normal Vedic word formation patterns. The adjective is generally taken to mean "fruitful' or the like and may be connected with the word *tilá* "sesame." If so, the creation and abundant scattering of seed may be the intended meaning here, though this is only a guess. The English idiom used to translate this obscure word is meant to convey its special status in the diction of this otherwise unremarkable hymn.

1. The first beacons have been seen opposite; her unguents diffuse aloft.
   Dawn, with your lofty, light-filled chariot turned hither, convey to us a thing of value.
2. In response to her the kindled fire awakens; in response (to her awaken) the inspired poets hymning (her) with their thoughts.
   The goddess Dawn travels, while pressing away all shades of darkness, all difficulties with her light.
3. These very dawns have been seen opposite in the east, extending their light, radiating widely.
   They have generated the sun, the sacrifice, the fire. The disagreeable darkness has gone back behind.
4. She has appeared, the bounteous Daughter of Heaven. All look at Dawn radiating widely.
   She has mounted the chariot being yoked by her own power, which horses of good yoke convey hither.
5. In response to you those of good thought have awakened today—our bounteous (patrons) and we (ourselves).
   Be fruitful and multiply, Dawns, while radiating widely. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.79 (595) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This little hymn is dense with phonetic figures and puns, and like the preceding hymn has signature words—in this case the preverb *ví* "apart, widely" and the phonologically similar verbal roots *vas* "dawn" and *vr̥* (*var*) "(un)cover."

Like many Dawn hymns, this one gives the opening of the Vala cave and the release of the cows imprisoned therein as the mythic model for each new dawn (see esp. vs. 4). Dawn's association with the distribution of goods is also emphasized in the last three verses.

1. Dawn has dawned widely along the path of the peoples, awakening the five settlements stemming from Manu.
   Along with her bulls lovely to see she has propped up her radiance. The Sun has uncovered the two world-halves with his eye.

2. They anoint the glossy nights at the ends of heaven; like clans in (battle-) harness the dawns are marshaled.
   Your cows roll the darkness up altogether; they extend the light, like Savitar his arms.
3. Dawn has come to pass—a bounteous benefactor most like Indra; she has generated fame for good faring.
   The divine Daughter of Heaven, most like the Aṅgirases, apportions goods to the man of good action.
4. As much largesse grant to us, Dawn, as you excavated for the praisers when you were being hymned.
   (You) whom they brought forth with the bellowing of the bull, you opened up the doors of the firm-fixed stone.
5. Impelling every god to largesse, rousing liberalities in our direction,
   dawning widely, impart insights to us for our gain. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.80 (596) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This very brief hymn, a mere three verses, sketches the main outlines of Dawn's activities, though it has no space to elaborate: her connection with poets and the morning ritual, her task of revealing the visible world and banishing darkness, and her connection with the distribution of goods.

1. With their praises, with their hymns, the Vasiṣṭhas, inspired poets, have awakened first in response to Dawn,
   as she unrolls the two adjoining realms, revealing all the beings.
2. And *she* has awakened, having taken on new life, having hidden the darkness with light—Dawn.
   She goes in front, youthful and unabashed. She has brought to light the sun, the sacrifice, the fire.
3. Let the Dawns, accompanied by horses, by cows, by heroes, dawn always auspicious for us,
   milking out ghee on all sides, teeming. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.81 (597) Dawn

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

This final hymn breaks the pattern of the other Dawn hymns in this series: it has too many verses for its position; it is composed of three pragāthas of bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī (as opposed to the triṣṭubh meter of the other hymns); and it lacks the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain. It is therefore likely to have been an addition to the collection, and the 1st-person plural subjunctive *bhunájāmahai* in verse 5 with the modernized *-mahai* ending supports this assumption. However, the themes and concerns of the hymn and the phraseology employed do not differ significantly from those that went before.

1. She has appeared opposite, as she comes here dawning, the Daughter of Heaven.
   She unwraps the great darkness for seeing; the spirited one creates light.
2. The sun sends the ruddy (cows) surging up all together, as that heavenly body itself goes up with his rays.
   O Dawn, just at your first flush and that of the sun, might we be united with what is apportioned.

3. In response to you, o Dawn, Daughter of Heaven, we lively ones have awakened—
   you who convey much to be coveted, you winner, (who convey) pleasure, like a treasure, to the pious one.
4. You who in dawning, through your magnanimity, o great goddess, make the sun to be visible for seeing—
   may we—we beseech you—have a share of your treasure, being to you like sons to their mother.

5. Bring here that brilliant bounty, Dawn, that has the longest fame.
   What of yours provides nourishment to men, o Daughter of Heaven, give us that. Let us be nourished!
6. (Bring) fame immortal and riches for our patrons, prizes in cows for us—
   The impeller of the bounteous one(s), possessing a liberal spirit, Dawn dawns away failures.

VII.82 (598) Indra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: jagatī

This hymn is structured into two sections, with the second embedded in the first. The first is an invocation to Indra and Varuṇa to come to the rite and consists of verses 1 and 7–10. The second section and the heart of the hymn are verses 2–6, which describe the two sides of kingship that the two gods represent.

Indra represents the king ruling during times of migration and conflict; Varuṇa represents the king ruling during times of settlement, ideally times of peace. In the

political structure of the Vedic period, different men may have been kings during these two times or, as we believe more likely, the same king may have exercised these complementary functions at different times of the year.

In verse 2 the poet calls one of the gods *samrā́j* "sovereign king" and the other *svarā́j* "independent king." While both terms can be used of both Indra and Varuṇa (cf. Schlerath 1960: 132–35), *samrā́j* is used especially frequently of Varuṇa and the Ādityas (cf. I.25.10; V.63.3, 85.1; VIII.25.7–8, 29.9, 42.1; X.63.5) and *svarā́j* frequently of Indra (cf. I.61.9; III.45.5; VIII.12.14, 46.28, 61.2, 69.17, 93.11). Therefore, despite Schlerath's doubts, the "sovereign king" here is likely Varuṇa and the "independent king" Indra. Further, at least in this verse, the contrasting titles likely reflect the distribution of kingly functions between the two gods. Since the *samrā́j* governed the peoples and their divisions, he might be connected with times of settlement. Since the *svarā́j* was independent of other authority, he might be associated with times of conflict between separate clans, peoples, and rulers.

However the relation between *svarā́j* and *samrā́j* is to be understood, the poet insists on the necessity of both kinds of king and both sides of kingship. Indeed, after contrasting the two gods in verse 2ab, the poet emphasizes their similarity (2cd) and their united action in ordering the world (3ab). In verse 3cd the actions of the ritual are blended with the gods' cosmic functions. The two gods share Soma—here both the ritual drink and the god—who inspires their action and who therefore metonymically possesses the transforming power, the "cunning" (*māyā́*), by which they made the waters swell. The image of swelling waters is then metaphorically carried over to the hymns, which should likewise swell.

In verse 4 the poet returns to the two periods associated with the two sides of kingship: in 4a the poet and his people are moving in chariots at the time of conflict and migration; in 4b they are seated at the beginning of the period of settlement. But here, unlike verse 2ab, the poet does not explicitly distinguish between the two gods. Both gods are summoned at both times. In verse 5cd, however, he reintroduces their opposition by connecting Varuṇa with settlement and Indra with movement. This alternation between conjunctions and disjunctions underscores the mutual dependence of the different sides of kingship and the poet's insistence that both gods are great.

Verse 6 continues the contrast between Indra and Varuṇa in a fashion similar to verse 2, although the actions of the gods in 6cd are not entirely clear. Assuming that 6c refers to the action of Indra and possibly to the destruction of Vr̥tra and similar "obstacles," then 6d describes the action of Varuṇa. As Renou (*EVP* VII: 83) notes, the verb *prá* √*vr̥* in 6d is rare, but appears to mean "ward off" the attack of an enemy (cf. IX.21.2). Unlike the aggressive action of Indra in 6c, the action of Varuṇa is thus defensive. Perhaps he protects the individual settlements during times of peace from incursions from enemies who might threaten them. The two gods thus have complementary functions in their different contexts and the similarity between them is reflected in the singular *ójas* "power" (6b) that both possess.

In verse 1 the poet is especially aware that his is not the most elaborate sacrifice offered, but he asks the gods to ignore what he sees as the overly showy rites of his

competitors and to come to his rite. While it may be plainer than other rites, it does not have the evil intent behind it that those rites have. Returning to this theme in the latter part of the hymn, verses 7–10, the poet pleads for the attention of Indra and Varuṇa. In verse 9 he recalls the competition for the gods' favor and again asks the gods to hear his words, for his sacrifice will please the gods more than the words and rites of others.

1. O Indra and Varuṇa, extend great protection to our rite, to our clan and people.
   In the contests might we conquer the one whose fore-offerings are long, who is overzealous—those of vile intent!
2. One of you two is called a sovereign king [=Varuṇa]; the other an independent king [=Indra]. Indra and Varuṇa are both great, both bearers of great goods.
   All the gods in the furthest heaven have united power and strength in you two, o bulls.
3. You two drilled holes for the waters by your power, and you two raised the preeminent sun in heaven.
   O Indra and Varuṇa, in the exhilaration of cunning (Soma) you made the depleted (waters) swell. Make our insights swell!
4. As chariot-drivers we call upon just you in conflicts and battles; (seated) with knees fixed, we call upon you at your instigation of peaceful settlement;
   we singers call upon you, easy to call, the masters of the good belonging to both (war and peace), o Indra and Varuṇa.
5. O Indra and Varuṇa, since you two created all these beings of the living world by your greatness,
   with peaceful settlement Mitra befriends Varuṇa; with the Maruts the other, powerful one [=Indra] speeds toward beauty.
6. For the sake of (displaying) the great exchange-gift (of Indra?) and the vibrant might of Varuṇa, the two show the measure of enduring power belonging to him [=to each one], which is his own:
   the one [=Indra] overcomes the piercing (enemy) [=Vṛtra?], who is no kin; with a few the other [=Varuṇa] wards off the greater.
7. Narrow straits do not (come) upon the mortal, nor do difficulties, nor does burning heat from anywhere, o Indra and Varuṇa,
   to whose rite you two come, o gods, (whose rite) you two pursue, nor does a mortal's crookedness reach him.
8. Come near with your divine help, o you fine men! Listen to (this) call, if you will find pleasure in my (call).
   Because there is companionship with you two or since there is friendship, extend compassion (to us), o Indra and Varuṇa.

9. For us, o Indra and Varuṇa, be our vanguard in every contest, o you who have power over the peoples,
   when in competition men of both sides then call upon you to win kith and kin.
10. Let Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman extend to us their brilliance, their great, widespread protection,
   and the unassailable light of Aditi—they who grow strong through the truth. We will keep in mind the signal call of the god Savitar.

VII.83 (599) Indra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: jagatī

This hymn looks back at the Battle of the Ten Kings described in VII.18, in which the Bharata king Sudās with the help of the Vasiṣṭhas triumphed over an alliance of ten rulers. This battle was a key moment in Vasiṣṭha history, and the poet recalls this historic victory in order to extend it into the present. Now warriors allied with the Vasiṣṭhas are going forth in their quest for cattle (vs. 1). Looking on Indra and Varuṇa, who are present at the sacrifice, with their minds if not with their eyes and thinking of their close association with the two gods, the poet and his allies call upon the gods to help them. The cry to help Sudās in 1d replicates the call to which the gods responded before and sets the stage for the poet's recollection of the Ten Kings' battle.

In verse 3 the poet re-enters the earlier battle and speaks as if he were part of it or speaks in the voice of those who were. In the person of the earlier Vasiṣṭha, he calls for help in the midst of the turmoil of battle. Then in verse 4ab he remembers that the gods did help Sudās, and in 4cd the poet returns to his present, calling on Indra and Varuṇa to hear him. Like the earlier Vasiṣṭha, the poet and his people confront enemies on every side (vs. 5ab), and therefore he calls upon Indra and Varuṇa to help at the critical time as they did before (5cd). The poet knows that others summon the gods as well (vs. 6ab), but in verses 6cd–8 he recalls that the gods chose to help Sudās and Vasiṣṭha and not the other kings and priests. In the end the sacrifices of these others were inadequate, and in the end the gods were present at the sacrifice of Vasiṣṭha (vss. 7–8). In verse 9 the poet distinguishes Indra and Varuṇa for the first and only time in this hymn. While the two gods may have different functions, both their divine functions apply to the poet's present situation. Indra can bring victory to the poet and his people and Varuṇa can defend them.

1. Looking upon you two and their friendship (with you), o you superior men, the broad-chested ones have gone forward in their quest for cattle.

Strike down the obstacles, both Dāsa and Ārya! Help Sudās with your help, Indra and Varuṇa!

2. Where superior men gather together with their banners set, in a contest where there is nothing at all to love,
where living beings, seeing the sun, become afraid, there speak for us, Indra and Varuṇa!

3. "The ends of the earth have appeared covered in dust! O Indra and Varuṇa, the tumult has mounted to heaven!
The tribes' hostilities have come upon me: o you hearing my call, come near with help."

4. Indra and Varuṇa, conquering Bheda without opposition with your deadly weapons, you helped Sudās.
Hear the sacred formulations to summon you! The placement of the Tr̥tsus [=the Vasiṣṭhas] in front came to be their true (place).

5. Indra and Varuṇa, the evils of the stranger and the hostilities of the aggressive ones burn against me.
Because you two are kings of the good belonging to both (war and peace?), so once more help us on the decisive day.

6. Both (sides) call upon you two in the contests, upon Indra and upon Varuṇa, to win what is good,
(as) when you helped Sudās together with the Tr̥tsus, when he was hard pressed by the ten kings.

7. Gathered together but without a zeal to sacrifice, the ten kings gave no fight to Sudās, o Indra and Varuṇa.
The invitatory praise of the superior men [=priests] sitting down to the [sacrificial] meal came true: at the call of these to the gods, the gods became present.

8. Indra and Varuṇa, you did your best for Sudās, surrounded on every side in the battle with the ten kings,
when they, the bright-faced ones with braided hair, through their reverence—the insightful Tr̥tsus through their insight—offered their service.

9. The one [=Indra] smashes obstacles in battles; the other [=Varuṇa] ever guards his commandments.
We summon you two, you bulls, with our intricate hymns. Extend your protection to us, Indra and Varuṇa.

10. Let Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman extend to us their brilliance, their great, widespread protection,
and the unassailable light of Aditi—they who grow strong through the truth. We will keep in mind the signal call of the god Savitar.

VII.84 (600) Indra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The theme of rapid and forward movement dominates this hymn. This movement is marked by the repetition of *prá* "forth" or "forward" in verses 1c, 3d, 4c, and 5b and by verbal forms such as *invati* "speeds" in 2a and *-jūtaḥ* "hastened" in 3c. The various kinds of movement involve the proffering of hymns and oblations and the answering progress of the sacrificers by means of the wealth and offspring they receive from the gods. There is also movement implied in the "speed" of the rule of Indra and Varuṇa (2a), which extends high and wide. In verse 2, verbally enclosed within this description of the extent of their rule (2a, 2d), are the "bonds" of the two gods (2b) and the anger of Varuṇa (2c), which show the menacing power of the gods to enforce their rule.

Another characteristic of this hymn is verbal sleight of hand in verses 1 and 4. In verse 1 the "ghee-rich one" (*ghṛtā́cī*) would normally described the sacrificial ladle, but, as Renou (*EVP* VII: 85) notes, it can also characterize the *dhī́*, the "insight" embodied in the hymn (I.2.7) or the "songs" (*gíraḥ*, VII.5.5). Because this "ghee-rich one" is held in the arms of the priests, hearers would think first of the ladle. But in 1d the "ghee-rich one" goes "by itself" and "in its varying appearance." These descriptions would fit the hymn, which flies to the gods with its varied sounds and words. The final line, therefore, creates for hearers an unexpected redefinition of the "ghee-rich one" and produces a double image of it as both ladle and hymn. As such, the "ghee-rich one" represents the "oblations and reverence" offered to the gods in 1b.

Neither the translation nor the interpretation of verse 4cd is secure. The relative clause in 4c surely describes Varuṇa, but *śū́ra* "champion" in 4d is more likely a description of Indra. So the normal relation between relative and main clauses suggests that the subject in 4d is Varuṇa (as Sāyaṇa understands it to be), but the content of 4d suggests that it is Indra. Moreover, there is a word play between *minā́ti* "confounds," which ends 4c, and *ámitā* "immeasurable," which opens 4d. They are not from the same root, although they sound as though they could be. The words thus create a verbal icon of simultaneous similarity and difference. These ambiguities accord with the representation of Varuṇa and Indra as embodying different sides of kingship, which are nonetheless complementary and necessary to one other. As we read the lines, therefore, the two gods are separately characterized, but their separation is undermined by formal features that efface it.

1. I would turn you two here to our rite with oblations and reverence, o kings Indra and Varuṇa.
   The ghee-rich one [=the ladle/hymn] (goes) forth to you two, being held (forth) in our arms. By itself it goes all around in its varying appearance.

2. Heaven speeds the lofty rule of you two, who bind with ropeless bonds.
   Might the anger of Varuṇa avoid us. Indra will make a wide, wide world for us.
3. Make our sacrifice cherished at the ritual distributions; make our sacred formulations acclaimed among patrons.
   Let wealth, hastened by the gods, come to us. Further us with the help we crave.
4. On us, o Indra and Varuṇa, bestow wealth granting every wish, rich in goods and many cattle.
   If the Āditya [=Varuṇa] confounds untruths, the champion [=Indra] apportions immeasurable goods.
5. This song of mine has reached Indra and Varuṇa. It helped (us) forward, multiplying us in kith and kin.
   Having good treasure, we would go in pursuit of the gods. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.85 (601) Indra and Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet announces his hymn in the first verse, implicitly comparing it to Agni, the sacrificial fire. Agni has a "face of ghee," that is, he is both bright like ghee and receives oblations of ghee (cf. I.143.7, III.1.18, V.11.1, X.21.7). This prepares for verse 4, in which the poet asks that Agni be the Hotar of this rite, who will bring the oblations to Indra and Varuṇa. The last verse is also found as VII.84.5 but is less thematically connected to this hymn than it is to the previous hymn.

1. While offering soma to Indra and Varuṇa, I will purify for you two an inspired thought free from anything demonic
   and with a face of ghee like the goddess Dawn. Let those two give us wide space at the moment of encounter on our journey.
2. Surely they contest with one another here in summoning the gods, where missiles fly amid the banners.
   O Indra and Varuṇa, with your arrow strike those enemies, that they be far away and dispersed.
3. Since even the waters of innate glory, goddesses (themselves) have set Indra and Varuṇa in their seats among the gods,
   the one [=Varuṇa] holds fast the agitated peoples; the other [=Indra] smashes the unopposable obstacles.
4. Let him [=Agni] of strong resolve, perceiving the truth, be our Hotar— the one who bringing homage (turns) you two (here) by his power, o Āditya.

Bringing oblations, he will turn you two here to help. Bringing pleasure (to you), he will indeed be the one present for our safe passage.

5. This song of mine has reached Indra and Varuṇa. It helped (us) forward, multiplying (us) in kith and kin.
   Having good treasure, we would go in pursuit of the gods. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.86 (602) Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn and the following three hymns (VII.87–89) are justly famous because they have an unusually intimate tone and because the poet Vasiṣṭha as a literary creation of the poem emerges as a distinct personality. Jamison (2007: 91–118) offers a detailed study of the hymns in this group and of the creation of the poet's personality. Like the other hymns in this small collection, this poem centers on just two figures, the poet—Vasiṣṭha according to tradition—and the god Varuṇa, and Vasiṣṭha speaks personally, even confessionally with Varuṇa. Apparently Vasiṣṭha has been suffering from some kind of affliction, which, he has been told, is the punishment of King Varuṇa for an offense. He begs Varuṇa to accept his offerings and repentance, to forgive his transgressions, which he says were not intentional (vs. 6), and to restore him to prosperity and health.

The relationship between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa constantly shifts as the hymn unfolds. The literary strategy of the poem most clearly appears in its use of pronouns and other markers of person, as Jamison (2007: 96–100) shows in her analysis. Use of the 3rd person distances the speaker and the object, while addressing another as "you" is a token of closeness and presence to one another. The poet deploys these pronouns first to distance Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa, then to bring them close, and finally to separate them once again. So in verse 1 Vasiṣṭha is absent because there is no reference to the speaker, and Varuṇa is distanced by the 3rd singular pronoun *asya*. His absence is mitigated only by fact that unaccented *asya* should be anaphoric and therefore might point to the previous presence of the god. Otherwise, the relationship between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa is completely broken. In verse 2 Vasiṣṭha is present (1st sg. in each of the four lines), and Varuṇa remains distanced. In verse 3 Vasiṣṭha is present once again (1st sg.) and Varuṇa is partly present: he is addressed in the vocative but he is also mentioned in the 3rd person. In verse 4 both Vasiṣṭha (1st sg.) and Varuṇa (2nd sg.) are present. Then there begins a retreat from their full presence to one another. In verse 5 Vasiṣṭha is less present (the 1st pl. generalizes rather than personalizes the speaker) and Varuṇa is present (through the vocative address and 2nd sg. imperative). This verse reverses 3, in which Vasiṣṭha was fully present but Varuṇa partly present. In verse 6 Vasiṣṭha is distanced (note especially *svá* "one's own," not "my own"), and Varuṇa is present (through the vocative address). Again

this verse reverses 2, in which Vasiṣṭha was present and Varuṇa was distanced. In verse 7 Vasiṣṭha is present (1st sg.), but Varuṇa is distanced (3rd sg.). This partially reverses 1 insofar as Vasiṣṭha was absent there but is present here. Varuṇa remains distanced in both verses 1 and 7. The last verse (8), is a concluding, extra-hymnic verse, a coda that stands outside the main structure of the hymn.

This analysis also shows the omphalos structure of the hymn. Verse 1 corresponds to 7, verse 2 to 6, verse 3 to 5, and verse 4 is the center. It is the thematic heart of the hymn because it is in this verse that the poet and the god are both present and present to one another. It also signifies the determination of Vasiṣṭha, who anticipates the resolution of his conflict with Varuṇa. Varuṇa will—perhaps even in the sense of "must"—proclaim what Vasiṣṭha has done, and Vasiṣṭha promises to make amends to the god to receive the god's forgiveness. Although the hymn moves away from this encounter between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa, the last verse suggests that the problem has been resolved. Varuṇa has returned to the distance, but he and Vasiṣṭha now mutually support one another. Varuṇa has enlightened Vasiṣṭha (vs. 7c), and Vasiṣṭha ritually serves the god to his greater "wealth," his power and glory (7d).

In verse 2b the meaning of *váruṇe* "within Varuṇa" may play on the possible etymological relation of *váruṇa* and *vratá* "commandment." That is, "within Varuṇa" has the sense of "under, or in conformity with, the commandment of Varuṇa." The poet wants to be no longer at odds with Varuṇa. At the same time the hope for closeness to the god or even for envelopment by the god, which is suggested in the phrase, looks forward to the increasing intimacy of Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa. The state is both parallel to and contrasts with the situation in verse 6c where the elder is "within the misdeed of the younger."

In verse 4d, we read *áva . . . īyām*, from *ava* + √*yā* "make recompense," instead of the transmitted but metrically faulty *áva . . . iyām*.

1. Insightful are the races (of gods and mortals) through the greatness of him who propped apart the two wide world-halves.
   He pushed forth the vault of heaven to be high and lofty, (also) the star [=the sun] once again, and he spread out the earth.
2. And together with my own self, I speak this: "When shall I be within Varuṇa?
   Might he take pleasure in my offering, becoming free of anger? When shall I, with good thoughts, look upon his mercy?"
3. I ask myself about this guilt, o Varuṇa, wanting to see; I approach those who understand in order to inquire.
   Even the sage poets say the very same thing to me: "Varuṇa now is angry with you."
4. Was the offense so very great, Varuṇa, that you wish to smash a praise singer and companion?
   You will declare this to me, o you hard to deceive, o you of independent will! With reverence I would swiftly *make recompense to you (to be) freed of guilt.

5. Release from us ancestral deceits and those that we ourselves have committed.
   O king, release Vasiṣṭha from his bond like a cattle-stealing thief, like a calf.
6. This was not one's own devising nor was it deception, o Varuṇa, (but rather) liquor, frenzy, dice, thoughtlessness.
   The elder exists within the misdeed of the younger. Not even sleep wards off untruth.
7. Like a servant, I will give satisfaction to the generous (master); freed from offense, I (will give satisfaction) to the ardent one.
   The civilizing god [=Varuṇa] made those without understanding to understand; the better sage poet [=Vasiṣṭha] speeds his clever (patron) [=Varuṇa] to riches.
8. This praise song is for you, Varuṇa, you who are of independent will: let it be set within your heart.
   Let there be good fortune in peaceful settlement for us and let there be good fortune in war for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.87 (603) Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

On this hymn, see the introduction to the previous hymn and especially Jamison (2007: 101–3).

The name of Varuṇa occurs in each verse of the hymn, and in verse 4 Varuṇa himself speaks. Like the previous one, therefore, this hymn has an omphalos structure, organized around the central verse 4 and the words of the god himself. In hymns organized around a central verse, that verse is often the key to understanding a hymn or the dramatic climax of the hymn, as it is, for example, in the previous hymn. But sometimes, as here, it is the most enigmatic verse of all. In 4a, as implied in the translation below, does Varuṇa know that the poet is wise and therefore will understand his cryptic words? Or does *médhira* "wise" anticipate the wisdom that the poet will receive from Varuṇa's words? In that case, we might rather say that Varuṇa spoke "to me (to make me) wise"? As Jamison (2007: 102–3) argues, the ambiguous placement of *ná* in 4c allows it to be taken either as a particle of comparison ("like") or as a negation ("not"). As a result the pāda can mean either "he will speak (their names) like secrets," that is, he will speak the names but he will do so only in a cryptic manner, or "he will not speak their secret (names)," that is, he will keep the secrets hidden. But most of all, there are the obscure words of the god in 4b: "The inviolable cow bears three times seven

names." As often, the "cow" in this verse is speech (e.g., Thompson 1995: 20), and it is speech, or more specifically this hymn, that carries within it twenty-one "names." These names may be similar to the three times seven "tracks" (*padā́*) in I.72.6, although these tracks too are also "secret" (*gúhyāni*) and therefore their reference unclear.

There is one possible clue to the twenty-one names in the following verse. Verse 5 mentions three heavens and three earths "arranged in six" or "arranged in sixes." That is, "six" could refer to the three heavens and three earths, and, if so, we should translate, "Three heavens are hidden within him, and below are three earths, forming an arrangement of six." On the other hand, if *ṣáḍvidhānāḥ* refers only to the three earths and if each of the three earths is arranged in six, then we would have eighteen earths and three heavens, which gives twenty-one, the number of "names." In that case, the "names" might be tokens of the extent of Varuṇa's rule.

Returning again to verse 4, its last mystery is the "later generation" in 4d, which may refer not to a future generation of human beings but to humans as the "generation" of beings later than the gods. If so, then Varuṇa strives to instruct humans despite their limited capacities, perhaps well illustrated in our attempts to understand him.

While verse 4 is the most enigmatic in the hymn, it is not the only mysterious one. We have already touched on the riddle of three heavens and three earths of verse 5ab. In verse 6a Varuṇa is like the sky, which drops to the horizon at the far distance where there is the river that surrounds the earth. Because he is like the sky that drops toward this river, he is called a wild animal (6b) that comes down to the water to drink and he is like the "bright drop," which, as Geldner points out, might be the setting moon or sun or even the soma as it sinks into the waters with which it is mixed. In 6c Varuṇa is "of deep recitation." The primary sense is probably that Varuṇa speaks profound words, but the compound is ambiguous and could also mean that Varuṇa inspires or receives profound praise-recitations. Verse 7 connects this hymn to the previous hymn and provides a persuasive reason to link the two hymns, as Jamison (2007: 103) has noted. In VII.86.2 the poet asks, "When shall I be within Varuṇa?" Here in verse 7 the poet gives an answer: when we are free of offense, then "we would be within Varuṇa." That is, we would be in conformity with the *vratā́ny áditeḥ* "the commandments of Aditi," the goddess representing offenselessness, whose commandments are mentioned in 7c.

1. Varuṇa dug the paths for the sun. Forward (went) the floods of rivers to the sea,
   (those) mares, like a surge sent surging, following the truth. He made great streambeds for the days.
2. Your breath, the wind, roars again and again through airy space, like an ardent animal [=stallion], victorious in its pasture.
   (Here are) all your own domains, Varuṇa, between these two great and lofty world-halves.

3. With united desire the spies of Varuṇa survey both well-supported world-halves,
   (as do) the sage poets, possessing the truth and insightful in the sacrifices, the discerning ones who send their thought.
4. Varuṇa said to me who am wise: "The inviolable cow bears three times seven names."
   Knowing of its track, he will speak (its names) like secrets—he, the inspired poet who strives on behalf of the later generation.
5. Three heavens are hidden within him, and below are three earths, arranged in sixes.
   The clever King Varuṇa created this, the golden swing in heaven [=the sun], for the sake of beauty.
6. Like heaven, Varuṇa has descended to the river—he, the powerful wild animal, like the bright drop;
   he of deep recitation, who takes the measure of the airy space; he the king of what is, whose lordship offers good passage.
7. Might we be without offense within Varuṇa, who will have mercy even on him who has committed an offense,
   as we obediently fulfill the commandments of Aditi. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.88 (604) Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This intricate and justly admired hymn has been widely anthologized and studied. See especially the treatment of the hymn in Jamison (2007: 103–8) and Lüders (1951: 315–21). It is closely related to the two preceding hymns and likewise concerns the relationship between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa, delineating it in perhaps the most intimate fashion of any of these hymns.

Vasiṣṭha speaks for himself in these verses, even though he begins in verse 1 by addressing himself in the vocative. Once again, the theme of the poem is the distance between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa that has been created by something that Vasiṣṭha has done. That Vasiṣṭha addresses himself in the 2nd person perhaps suggests not only his distance from the god but even, as a result, from himself. The meaning of this becomes clearer as the poem develops. In verse 2 Vasiṣṭha approaches the ritual fire during the night and in the face of fire sees the face of Varuṇa. This results in a vision of Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa sailing together (vs. 3). Their goal is Varuṇa's "swing," which, as in VII.87.5, is probably the sun, which Vasiṣṭha hopes will dispel the darkness that surrounds him and his relationship with Varuṇa. This vision takes Vasiṣṭha back to the time when he and Varuṇa were close (vs. 4), when Varuṇa made Vasiṣṭha a seer (*ṛ́ṣi*) and praise singer (*stotár*). The light imagery is most intense in this verse,

for the day Vasiṣṭha became a seer and praise singer was the "brightest day of days." This memory of a time of perfect harmony between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa is the dramatic and emotional climax of the hymn and not surprisingly occupies the central verse of the hymn, which like the two previous hymns has an omphalos structure.

In verse 5 Vasiṣṭha returns from his vision and memory of better times to the unhappy present, in which he is no longer in the household of Varuṇa. But in verse 6 he continues to hope that, despite what he has done, the god will not hold his offenses against him, and will again offer him the protection that he once enjoyed within the house of Varuṇa. The poet keeps these offenses distant from himself by talking about the offender in the 3rd person (in 6ab), but then he refers to those who bear the guilt of those offenses in the 1st person (in 6c). Finally, in verse 7 the poet more confidently looks to Varuṇa's forgiveness: he "will release his fetter" of punishment "from us." As Jamison (2007: 107) has pointed out, both pādas a and c have present participles for which there is no grammatically appropriate noun. Logically they should describe "us"—and that logic is reflected in the translation—but the absence of an explicit reference to us generalizes that happy result and the possibility of reconciliation with the god.

1. Present to generous Varuṇa a carefully preened, much-loved thought, o Vasiṣṭha,
   to him, the lofty bull who brings a thousand rewards—(you, Vasiṣṭha,) who will make near at hand the one worthy of the sacrifice.
2. Now then, when I came into sight of him, I thought the face of Agni to be that of Varuṇa.
   When the sun is in the rock and darkness is master, may he lead me to see his wondrous form.
3. When we two, Varuṇa and (I), will board the boat, when we two will raise the middle of the sea,
   when we two will voyage through the crests of the waters, we will swing on the swing for beauty.
4. Varuṇa placed Vasiṣṭha on the boat. Skillful in his work, he made him a seer through his great powers.
   The inspired poet (made him) a praise singer on that brightest day of days for so far as the heavens, for so long as the dawns will extend.
5. Where have these companionships of ours come to be, when previously we would have accompanied one another without wolfish hostility?
   O Varuṇa of independent will, I went into your lofty mansion, your house with its thousand doors.
6. Varuṇa, though one be your very own dear friend and your companion, if he will commit offenses against you,
   may we, burdened with guilt, not pay for (the transgression) against you, you uncanny one. As an inspired poet, ever offer protection to him praising you.

7. Dwelling in enduring peaceful dwellings, (we will win) you—Varuṇa will release his fetter from us—
   (we), winning help from the lap of Aditi. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.89 (605) Varuṇa

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–4, jagatī 5

As Oldenberg remarks, although this hymn does not break the sequence of verse numbers and meter, it appears to be an addition to this Varuṇa collection. It is in another meter, and Vasiṣṭha does not appear by name within it. Moreover, while the other three hymns of this collection refer to Vasiṣṭha's unhappy state, this hymn more explicitly concerns an illness afflicting the speaker. It is an illness so serious that it could bring the speaker to the *mṛnmáyaṃ gṛhám* "house of clay" (vs. 1), the earth, in which the dead are buried.

According to both indigenous commentators and contemporary scholars, the illness especially associated with Varuṇa is dropsy, on which see Zysk (1985: 59–61). The reference in verse 2 to the speaker as "inflated like a water-skin" could point to dropsy, as could *prasphuránn iva*, here translated "seeming to kick," if it is interpreted as stumbling or as describing the water-skin as quivering. But the evidence is not very firm.

The last verse, which is in a different meter, brings the hymn closer to the preceding three hymns, since it lays the blame for the speaker's condition on a violation of the commandments of Varuṇa, his *dhármā* "ordinances."

1. O King Varuṇa, let me not go to the house of clay!
   – Be merciful, o you whose dominion is great. Have mercy.
2. If I go, seeming to kick, inflated like a water-skin, o master of the pressing stones,
   be merciful, o you whose dominion is great. Have mercy!
3. By my weakness of will I have gone against the current in every way, o bright one.
   – Be merciful, o you whose dominion is great. Have mercy!
4. Though he is standing in the midst of waters, thirst has found the singer.
   – Be merciful, o you whose dominion is great. Have mercy!
5. Whatever this deceit that we humans practice against the divine race, o Varuṇa,
   if by inattention we have erased your ordinances, do not harm us because of that guilt, o god.

VII.90 (606) Vāyu (1–4), Indra and Vāyu (5–7)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The split dedication to Vāyu, then Indra and Vāyu reflects the ritual fact noted often elsewhere, that the first offerings of soma at the Morning Pressing are made to Vāyu alone and then to Indra and Vāyu jointly. This ritual purpose is announced quite clearly in the first verse, and, as often in Vāyu hymns, the invitation is followed by the god's journey to the sacrifice. As often also in Vāyu hymns the poet makes productive use of the ambiguity between Vāyu's "teams," his wind-horses (see vs. 3), and ours, the poetic thought we deploy, and in verse 5 the priests and poets actually become the horses that pull the chariot of the two gods.

As befits the early morning setting of the ritual, Dawn is prominent in the hymn (vss. 3–4), with the latter verse alluding obliquely to the Vala myth associated with the primal dawn. The distribution of gifts and goods appropriate to the early morning ritual is also prominent. In the early verses 2 and 3 there is promise of benefits for the sacrificer from the gods, a promise that in the last two verses (6–7) is actually fulfilled by the gifts made by the human patrons of the sacrifice. Indeed the patrons seem to be partly assimilated to the gods: they have the power to confer not only goods but sunlight itself (see vs. 6), and they share with the gods the repeated participle *īśāná* "having dominion over," said of Vāyu in verse 2, of Indra and Vāyu in verse 5, and of the patrons in verse 6.

1. The clear, honeyed pressed (soma-drinks) have been presented to you two
   by the Adhvaryus with desire for heroes.
   Drive, Vāyu; travel to our teams [=poetic thoughts]. Drink of the pressed
   stalk, to euphoria.
2. Whoever has reached out the fore-offering to you who have dominion
   (over it), the clear soma for you, Vāyu, drinker of the clear,
   you make him acclaimed among mortals: each one born to him is a
   prizewinner.
3. The one whom these two world-halves begat for wealth, that god will the
   goddess, the Holy Place, position for wealth.
   Then his own teams accompany Vāyu and the gleaming white
   treasure-chamber [=Dawn] exclusively.
4. The dawns dawned, day-bright and stainless. (The men) have found
   broad light while reflecting.
   The fire-priests have opened up the cowpen. The waters have flowed for
   them from a distant day.
5. Reflecting with thinking that comes true, yoked by their own resolve,
   they draw
   the hero-bringing chariot of you two, o Indra and Vāyu. Strengthening
   nourishments escort (the chariot of you) who have dominion over (them).

6. They who, having dominion over (them), confer their sun(light) upon us, through cows, horses, and golden goods,
   o Indra and Vāyu, those patrons should prevail in battles through their whole lifetime with steeds and heroes.
7. Like steeds seeking their share of fame, we Vasiṣṭhas with our lovely praise hymns,
   seeking prizes, would call upon Indra and Vāyu for help. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.91 (607) Vāyu (1, 3), Indra and Vāyu (2, 4–7)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The last half of this hymn (vss. 4cd through 7, the last verse being repeated from VII.90.7) is a straightforward invitation to Indra and Vāyu to journey to the sacrifice, bringing goods to distribute, and to drink the soma. The first half of the hymn is both more miscellaneous and more obscurely phrased. True, verse 2 also issues the invitation to the two gods, but it is sandwiched between two verses with which it seems to have little in common.

Verse 1 is variously interpreted, with its parts variously arranged in translation. In our interpretation it contains speculation about the prior existence of the gods and the beginning of ritual activity: the gods who now derive their strength from men's sacrifices must have existed before the sacrifice began, the proof being that these gods created the dawn and the sun for both Vāyu, a god of the midspace, and for Manu, the first man and first sacrificer, under trying conditions. (A somewhat similar situation is depicted in VI.49.13, where Viṣṇu measures out the realms for "hard-pressed Manu," another cosmogonic deed.) The creation of dawn would in turn allow the ritual process, the ritual day, to begin—and begin it does with the offering to Vāyu. Verse 3 is clearly a depiction of the sacrifice, but the referents of the various phrases are not entirely certain. Although most scholars consider Vāyu the subject of the first half-verse, on the basis of shared vocabulary we instead consider it a disguised reference to the soma and its usual accompaniment, cow's milk. The soma drops then offer themselves to Vāyu. The first half of verse 4 complements the concerns in verse 1: in the first verse the time before the creation of the sacrifice by the gods is the subject of speculation; in 4ab the unbounded continuance of the sacrifice is envisioned, for as long as men have the power to perform it. With these ends of the sacrifice demarcated, the offering to Indra and Vāyu in the here-and-now can proceed, and the simple invitation of the rest of the hymn is issued to them.

1. Surely the faultless gods, who (now) grow strong through reverence, existed previously?

(Yes, because) for Vāyu, for hard-pressed Manu they made the dawn shine, along with the sun.

2. Two willing messengers, cow-protectors not to be deceived, you who protect through the months and the many autumns [=years]—
   Indra and Vāyu, this lovely praise hymn, speeding to you two, reverently invokes you for grace and easy passage anew.
3. The very wise one [=Soma], gleaming white, the full glory of the teams, accompanies those whose food is fat [=cows], who are strong through wealth.
   The like-minded (drops) have extended themselves for Vāyu. The men have done all (ritual actions) bringing good descendants.
4. As long as there is endurance of the body, as long as there is strength, as long as men keep reflecting with their sight,
   (so long) drink the clear soma among us, you drinkers of the clear. Indra and Vāyu, sit down here on this ritual grass.
5. Having hitched up the teams bringing coveted heroes, o Indra and Vāyu, drive nearby on the same chariot,
   for here is the foremost of the honey, presented to you two. Now, being pleased, unharness (your teams) among us.
6. The hundred teams, the thousand that accompany you two, bringing all valuables, o Indra and Vāyu,
   with those, good to acquire, drive nearby. Drink, men, of the honey brought before you.
7. Like steeds seeking their share of fame, we Vasiṣṭhas with our lovely praise hymns,
   seeking prizes, would call upon Indra and Vāyu for help. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.92 (608) Vāyu (1, 3–5), Indra and Vāyu (2)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The “teams” of Vāyu are the primary topic of this hymn. They are identified as thousandfold in the first and last verses of the hymn, forming a conceptual ring, and in the middle verse (3) the productive ambiguity of the word is exposed: the teams are not merely the wind-horses that bring Vāyu here, but also the many forms of wealth he brings to us in return for the sacrifice. The even verses (2 and 4) first make the invitation to the sacrifice clear and then express wishes for success both for the priests and poets and for the patrons.

1. O Vāyu, drinker of the clear (soma), attend upon us. A thousand are your teams, o you who bring all valuables.

The exhilarating stalk has been held out close to you, the first drinking of which you have as your own, o god.

2. The lively presser has set forth the soma at the ceremonies, for Indra and Vāyu to drink,
as the Adhvaryus, seeking the gods with their (ritual) skills, present the foremost of the honey to you two.
3. With the teams that you drive forth to the pious one, Vāyu, for your quest in his house,
hitch up (teams that are) well-nourishing wealth for us, (teams that are) hero(es) and bounty in cows and horses.
4. We who are the Indra-exhilarating ones, (exhilarating) to Vāyu, who are god-directed and lavishly overflowing for the (Ārya) stranger—
may we, with our patrons, be (always) smashing obstacles; may we, with our superior men, be (always) victorious in battle over those without alliance (to us).
5. With your teams in the hundreds, in the thousands, drive here to our ceremony, right up to our sacrifice.
Vāyu, at this pressing exhilarate yourself. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.93 (609) Indra and Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
8 verses: triṣṭubh

The first six verses of this hymn, though they contain numerous examples of dual address of and reference to Indra and Agni together, are strongly skewed toward Indra. The two gods are called "smiters of Vr̥tra" (vss. 1, 4) and "possessors of good maces" (Indra's weapon; vs. 4); they "smite" (Indra's activity) the enemy (vs. 5) and "drive" to the sacrifice (vs. 6; since Agni is kindled on the ritual ground, he has no need to drive to it). Moreover the theme is the winning of prizes (*vā́ja*) and their distribution, and the besting of opponents: this agonistic cast is more typical of Indra than of Agni. The last two verses (7–8) are addressed to Agni only, in his familiar ritual role, mediating between the sacrificer and the gods, including Indra. But even in these verses Agni's own character is overlaid with that of other gods: for instance, in verse 7 he seems to be assimilated to Varuṇa and the other Ādityas in forgiving offenses.

1. Enjoy a blazing praise, newborn today, o Indra and Agni, smiters of Vr̥tra,
for I keep calling upon you both, good to call, the two who best set out the prize right away for him who wants it.

2. For you two, o swelling ones, grown in an instant, swollen in expanse, become winners.
   Holding sway over wealth, over abundant pasturage, give your fill of a prize, substantial but thrilling.
3. When the prize-seekers have come to the rite of distribution, the inspired poets with their visionary thoughts seeking your solicitude,
   like steeds reaching the finish line, the men ever calling on Indra and Agni—
4. With his hymns the inspired poet seeking your solicitude reverently invokes (you) for glorious wealth that provides the foremost portion.
   Indra and Agni, smiters of Vr̥tra, possessing good maces, further us with new gifts.
5. When the two great opposing (forces) mutually contending, shining with their own bodies, array themselves at the contest of champions,
   at the rite of distribution do you two smash utterly the man unallied to the gods with those allied to the gods, with the soma-pressing folk.
6. Drive right up to this soma-pressing of ours here, Indra and Agni, to (show) benevolence,
   for you never have disregarded us. Might I turn you two here with perpetual prizes.
7. Agni, kindled by this reverence, you should call Mitra, Varuṇa, and Indra here.
   Whatever offense we have committed, that forgive; that let (them and) Aryaman and Aditi unloose (from us).
8. Aspiring to these desires, Agni, might we attain prizes in company with you two.
   Let Indra, Viṣṇu, and the Maruts not overlook us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.94 (610) Indra and Agni

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
12 verses: gāyatrī 1–11, anuṣṭubh 12, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn consists of four sets of tr̥cas, and if each tr̥ca is considered originally a separate hymn, the principle of arrangement is not violated. There are two main themes, the varieties of poetic thought and its product, verbal praise, which the poets address to the two gods, and the hope that these gods will favor these poets over their rivals (see esp. vss. 3, 7, 8, 12). Despite the emphasis on poetic inspiration, there seems to be relatively little of it on display in this hymn, which is a bricolage of quotations from other hymns. The two gods, Indra and Agni, also lack traits, individually and collectively.

1. This foremost praise hymn of this conception is for you two, Indra and Agni.
   It has been born like rain from a cloud.
2. Hear the call of the singer; Indra and Agni, crave his hymns.
   Showing your mastery, swell his insights.
3. O Indra and Agni, you superior men—not to evil, nor to imprecation
   make us subject—nor to scorn.

4. To Indra, to Agni we raise lofty reverence, a (hymn) with a good twist,
   and nourishing streams (of truth?) with our visionary thought as we seek help.
5. For these two do the inspired poets, each and every one, reverently invoke in just this way, for aid,
   urgently, for the winning of prizes.
6. You two we invoke, expressing admiration with our hymns, dispensing ritual delight,
   seeking to win at the contest for wisdom.

7. Indra and Agni, come here to us with help, you who conquer the territories.
   Let a defamer not hold sway over us.
8. Don't let the malice of a nobody, an ungenerous mortal, reach us.
   Indra and Agni, extend (us) shelter.
9. The goods consisting of cows, of gold, of horses, which we beg you for,
   Indra and Agni, may we gain them.

10. When superior men kept calling Indra and Agni when the soma was pressed,
    (men) seeking to serve the two who possess teams—
11. The two best smiters of Vr̥tra who are just delighting in the solemn speeches, in the hymn,
    in the melodies of the one who seeks to win (them)—
12. Just you two—(strike) the evil-speaking, evil-knowing mortal of demonic power—
    strike the snake with a stroke; strike the water-(with)holder with a stroke.

VII.95 (611) Sarasvatī (1–2, 4–6), Sarasvant (3)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The multitalented goddess of wisdom and patroness of arts and music familiar from classical Hindu sources is not the Sarasvatī of the R̥gveda: in this text she is first and

foremost a river, and not the mythical river Sarasvatī of later times, but a real, physical river that flows "from the mountains to the sea" (see vs. 2). Her distinguishing characteristics are all associated with this physical nature: the power and beauty of her ever-flowing current, and the nourishment and riches it brings with it. She is often mentioned along with her sister rivers, as first among equals, and in this hymn (vs. 3) and the next (VII.96.4–6) also with her shadowy male counterpart Sarasvant.

1. She has flowed forth with her surge, with her nourishment—Sarasvatī is a buttress, a metal fortress.
   Thrusting forward all the other waters with her greatness, the river drives like a lady-charioteer.
2. Alone of the rivers, Sarasvatī shows clear, as she goes gleaming from the mountains all the way to the sea.
   Taking note of the abundant wealth of the world, she has milked out ghee and milk for the Nāhuṣa.
3. He has grown strong as a manly one among maidens, a bullish bull calf among the (river-maidens) worthy of the sacrifice.
   He provides a prizewinner to the benefactors. He should groom his body for winning.
4. And this Sarasvatī, the well-portioned, will harken to this sacrifice of ours, taking pleasure in it,
   being implored by reverential ones with their knees fixed. With wealth as her yokemate, she is even higher than her companions.
5. Here are (oblations) being poured all the way to you (rivers), along with reverences. Take pleasure in the praise, Sarasvatī.
   Being set in your dearest shelter, may we stand nearby it like a sheltering tree.
6. And this Vasiṣṭha here has opened up the doors of truth for you, well-portioned Sarasvatī.
   Strengthen (him?), resplendent one; grant prizes to the praiser. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.96 (612) Sarasvatī (1–3), Sarasvant (4–6)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: br̥hatī 1, satobr̥hatī 2, prastārapaṅkti 3, as extended pragātha; gāyatrī 4–6, as tr̥ca

This hymn is not metrically unified (see Oldenberg 1888: 200). The first three verses, dedicated to Sarasvatī, consist of a pragātha (vss. 1–2) of the usual type (br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī), extended with a third verse in prastārapaṅkti (12 12 8 8). The

other three verses form a conventional tṛca, dedicated to Sarasvant, whose character seems little different from his better-known counterpart Sarasvatī. It is perhaps the identity of the "bachelors" in verse 4 that suggests that prayer to a male divinity would be appropriate. But the attribution of a "swelling breast" to this same male in verse 6 is distinctly odd; a nourishing, wealth-giving breast (using the same word *stána*) for suckling is attributed in I.164.49 to Sarasvatī, a more suitable figure by her gender.

The phrase "both stalks" (*ubhé… ándhasī*) in verse 2 has occasioned much discussion, and in recent years some political and military conclusions have been drawn from one quite speculative interpretation of it—conclusions not justified by the evidence, in our opinion. Although most interpreters take the "two stalks" as referring to two different beverages, one of which is soma (the usual referent of singular *ándhas* is the soma stalk), either soma and surā or soma and milk, some, following Grassmann, interpret the word as referring metaphorically to the two banks of the river. From this interpretation it is inferred that the Pūrus crossed the Sarasvatī and conquered the territory on the other side—a conclusive leap based on a shaky interpretation of this word. By contrast, we interpret the term on the basis of the twinned hymn VII.95, whose corresponding verse 2 states that Sarasvatī "milked out ghee and milk," a liquid pairing that may well be referred to by the dual in verse 2 of this immediately following hymn.

1. I shall sing a lofty speech: she is the lordly one of the rivers.
   Magnify Sarasvatī with well-twisted (hymns); with praises (magnify) the
   two world-halves, o Vasiṣṭha.
2. Since by your might, resplendent lady, the Pūrus preside over
   both "stalks" [=honey and ghee? soma and surā? two banks
   of river?],
   become our helper, with the Maruts as companions. Stimulate the
   generosity of the benefactors.
3. Good Sarasvatī will do good. She shows brightly as the unstinting one,
   rich in prize mares,
   while she is being hymned as she was by Jamadagni and she is being
   praised as she was by Vasiṣṭha.

4. As bachelors in search of wives, in search of sons, possessing lovely
   gifts,
   we call upon Sarasvant.
5. Your waves, Sarasvant, which are rich in honey, dripping with ghee—
   with them become our helper.
6. The swelling breast of Sarasvant, which is lovely for all to see—
   we would share (in it and) in offspring and refreshment.

VII.97 (613) Indra (1), Bṛhaspati (2, 4–8), Indra and Brahmaṇaspati (3, 9), Indra and Bṛhaspati (10)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh

According to the Anukramaṇī (whose identifications are reproduced here in the heading) there is a wide array of divine dedicands for the individual verses of this hymn: Indra alone, Bṛhaspati alone, Indra and Bṛhaspati, and Indra and the more transparently named Brahmaṇaspati ("Lord of the Sacred Formulation"). The hymn is more carefully structured than the random listing would suggest, however.

First, as has often been discussed above, Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1968) has shown that Bṛhaspati was originally an epithet of Indra in his priestly role and only gradually split off into a separate god. As in IV.50 this divine history is recapitulated in part in the progress of this hymn, though in a different way from the earlier hymn. For most of the hymn only one of the divine figures is on stage at a time: verse 1 has Indra, verse 2 Bṛhaspati, and Bṛhaspati holds sway in verses 4–8. Even in verse 3, supposedly dedicated to both Indra and Brahmaṇaspati, the two are not depicted together, and in fact the phraseology seems designed to *identify* Indra as Brahmaṇaspati: the two-word phrase *bráhmaṇas pátim* "lord of the sacred formulation" in pāda b is, it seems, paraphrased with the defining relative clause of d, referring to Indra: *yó bráhmaṇaḥ… rā́jā* "who is king of the sacred formulation," with "king" substituting for "lord," thus superimposing the one on the other. What we are claiming here, then, is that in verses 1–8 the divine names Indra and Bṛhaspati/ Brahmaṇaspati refer to a single divine figure, Indra.

But when the transparent designation Brahmaṇaspati recurs in verse 9, it is immediately preceded by the dual pronoun *vām* "you two"; there must therefore now be two divine addressees, and the split between Indra and his epithet has been effected. The last two verses (9–10) call upon them both, using dual verbs, pronouns, and vocatives quite insistently. It is because we consider *bráhmaṇas páti-* an epithet in verse 3 and a divine name in verse 9 that we have translated them differently in the two verses. Notice also that Brahmaṇaspati, as opposed to Bṛhaspati, is only found in verses also containing the noun *bráhman* "sacred formulation."

But the hymn has another divine presence, not named but clearly there, who complicates the identity problem even more. The entire hymn is set on the ritual ground; this scene is set at the very beginning, in verse 1, starting with the word *yajñé* "at the sacrifice" and continuing with a clear depiction of the locus of ritual offerings, where men and gods (including Indra) meet. But, in the middle verses mentioning only Bṛhaspati (4–8), that god is described in ways extremely suggestive of Agni, the ritual fire: he sits on the womb (vs. 4); he is both bright and roaring (vs. 5), bright, golden, and good to enter (vs. 7), and most clearly, in the image of verse 6 he is dark below but possessed of horses like ruddy clouds. All of this phraseology has clear counterparts in descriptions of Agni. Thus, the divine figure Indra/

Bṛhaspati is identified here in this ritual context with the ultimate ritually oriented god, Agni. This identification is found elsewhere; see especially V.43.12.

It is noteworthy, but not surprising, that the usual mythological association of Indra/Bṛhaspati with the Vala cave is entirely absent.

1. At the sacrifice, at the seat of men (coming) from heaven and from earth, where men seeking the gods become exhilarated,
   where pressings are pressed for Indra, he will come at first for exhilaration and to vitality.
2. We choose divine help. Bṛhaspati holds himself ready for us here, o comrades,
   so that we might become without offense to the one who grants rewards, who is a giver to us from afar, like a father.
3. Him, the preeminent, well-disposed Lord of the Sacred Formulation will I sing, with reverence, with oblations.
   Let his divine signal-call mightily accompany Indra, who is the king of the god-created sacred formulation.
4. Let him sit as the dearest in our womb here—Bṛhaspati who is all-desirable [/granting all wishes].
   Desire for wealth in good heroes—that will he give. He will carry us across the parched places unharmed.
5. The recitation enjoyable to the immortal one—these immortals here, born of old, have imparted it to us.
   We would invoke the brightly roaring one, worthy of the sacrifice of the dwelling places, unassailing Bṛhaspati.
6. The capable, ruddy horses who pull together are pulling Bṛhaspati,
   who is simply strength itself, whose seat has darkness while (the horses) like a cloud clothe themselves in ruddy form.
7. He certainly is flame-bright; he is a preening (bird) with a hundred feathers; having a golden axe, he is vigorous, sun-winning—
   Bṛhaspati—good (for libations) to enter, lofty, the best at making the pressed drink in abundance for his comrades.
8. The two goddesses, the world-halves, begetters of the god, strengthened Bṛhaspati with their greatness.
   Comrades, exert your skill for the one whose skill is to be besought. He will make good fords, easy to cross, for the sacred formulation.
9. Here is a well-twisted (hymn) for you two, o Brahmaṇaspati. A sacred formulation has been made for Indra, the mace-bearer.
   Aid our insightful thoughts; awaken plentiful gifts. Exhaust the hostilities of the stranger, of the rapacious ones.
10. Bṛhaspati and Indra, you two hold sway over heavenly and earthly goods.
    Establish wealth for your praiser, even a weak one. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.98 (614) Indra (1–6), Indra and Bṛhaspati (7)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This is really an Indra hymn; the final verse dedicated to Indra and Bṛhaspati (vs. 7) is simply repeated from the previous hymn (VII.97.10). The theme of the rest of the hymn is Indra's close affinity with and unslakable desire for soma. Not only is it the regular ritual offering that he seeks daily (vss. 1–2), but it belonged to him from birth (vs. 3) and became his special substance after his first victories (vs. 5). The deeds and power of Indra are also celebrated. Intriguingly, his mother first proclaims his greatness (vs. 3): the mention of Indra's mother, especially in connection with soma, always tantalizingly alludes to apparently fraught family dynamics associated with Indra's birth (see III.48 and IV.18). Verse 5, near the end of the hymn, repeats the proclamation of his deeds, using the formula sometimes found and expected at the beginning of a hymn (see, e.g., I.32.1, I.154.1), though not rare later in the unfolding of the poem.

The poet, of course, wishes to profit from the battle-might soma inspires in Indra (vs. 4) and receive some of the spoils of his victories (vs. 6).

1. Adhvaryus, offer the ruddy, milked plant to the bull of the settled domains.
   Better at finding a drinking hole than a buffalo, Indra travels everywhere, seeking a man who has pressed the soma.
2. What you made your own dear food on a distant day, every day you desire the drinking just of that.
   Taking pleasure with heart and with mind, being eager, drink the soma drinks set out, Indra.
3. On being born, you drank the soma for strength. Your mother proclaimed your greatness.
   Indra, you filled the wide midspace; through combat you made a wide realm for the gods.
4. When you will set to fighting those who think themselves great, we shall overcome them, though they are exulting in their arms.
   Or when, Indra, with your superior men you will attack the defensive forces, with you may we win the contest that brings good fame.
5. I proclaim the first deeds of Indra, proclaim the present ones that he has performed.
   When he overcame the godless magic powers, then soma became his alone.
6. Yours is all this (wealth in) livestock all around, which you see with the eye of the sun.
   You alone are the cowherd of cows, Indra. Might we share in your proffered goods.

7. Bṛhaspati and Indra, you two hold sway over heavenly and earthly goods.
   Establish wealth for the praiser, even a weak one. – Do you protect us
   always with your blessings.

VII.99 (615) Viṣṇu (1–3, 7), Indra and Viṣṇu (4–6)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

As has been discussed previously, Viṣṇu, one of the great gods of classical Hinduism, is a marginal figure in the Ṛgveda, generally associated with Indra. Viṣṇu's primary mythic exploit in Vedic is the "three strides" he made across the cosmos, measuring out, enlarging, and mapping the cosmic spaces. In middle Vedic literature and later, Viṣṇu takes the form of a dwarf when making these vast strides, but there is no trace of this notion in the Ṛgveda.

The first three verses of this hymn are addressed solely to Viṣṇu and allude to his establishment and fixation of the cosmic spaces, though without directly mentioning his three strides. The first verse does sketch (in the second half) the three separate realms with which Viṣṇu is associated, an indirect reference to the three strides; but in verses 2 and 3 the action that creates the spaces is "propping," an action more characteristic of Indra. However, in verse 3 Viṣṇu fastens the earth down with "loom pegs," a homely device in a way. The word (*mayū́kha*) is found only one other time in the Ṛgveda, in verse 2 of the late hymn X.130, where the creation of the sacrifice is likened to weaving. This verse is also noteworthy for Viṣṇu's direct address to Heaven and Earth as he props them apart.

The second three verses (4–6) are dedicated to Indra and Viṣṇu together, and though heroic deeds are attributed to both of them, the deeds themselves are ones assigned only to Indra elsewhere (e.g., the destruction of Śambara and of Varcin in vs. 5). It is not unusual in hymns addressed to dual divinities for the more dynamic mythology of one to be credited to both.

The final verse is dedicated to Viṣṇu alone (Śipiviṣṭa being an enigmatic epithet of Viṣṇu found in the Ṛgveda only in this and the following hymn), though the sentiments of the verse are conventional. For further on the epithet, see the next hymn.

1. O you who have grown with your body beyond measure, they do not
   attain to your greatness.
   We (only) know both your dusky realms of the earth; god Viṣṇu, you
   yourself know the farthest one.
2. No one now born, no one previously born has reached the far end of
   your greatness, god Viṣṇu.
   You propped up the vault, lofty and high; you fixed fast the eastern peak
   of the earth.

3. "Since you two are full of refreshment, rich in milk-cows, become ones affording good pasture for Manu through your favor"—
   (So saying,) you propped apart these two world-halves, Viṣṇu; you fixed the earth fast all around with loom-pegs.
4. You two made a wide place for the sacrifice, while you were generating the sun, the dawn, the fire.
   The magical wiles even of the Dāsa Vṛṣaśipra did you smite in the battle drives, you two superior men.
5. O Indra and Viṣṇu, you pierced the nine and ninety fortified strongholds of Śambara.
   At one blow you smite the hundred and thousand heroes of the lord Varcin without opposition.
6. Here is a lofty inspired thought that strengthens the two lofty, wide-striding, powerful ones.
   I have granted you two praise at the rites of distribution, o Viṣṇu; you two, swell the nourishments in the ritual enclosures, o Indra.
7. I make the *vaṣaṭ*-cry to you from my mouth, Viṣṇu. Enjoy this oblation of mine, Śipiviṣṭa.
   Let my lovely praises, my hymns strengthen you. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.100 (616) Viṣṇu

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins conventionally enough, with a mortal offering sacrifice to the god (vs. 1) and a request for gifts in return (vs. 2). Viṣṇu's three strides are the subject of the following two, responsive verses (3–4). Verse 3d also introduces the theme of Viṣṇu's name, which is the subject of the last two real verses of the hymn (5–6, since vs. 7 is merely a repetition of the final verse of VII.99). The enigmatic epithet *śipiviṣṭá* found in the last verse of the last hymn (VII.99.7) is, as it were, interrogated in these verses. In verse 6 the poet, who boasts that he knows the hidden patterns, sets out to proclaim the god's name, while addressing him as Śipiviṣṭa, and then asks in the next verse whether the god's own proclamation of himself as Śipiviṣṭa was meant to be ignored or passed over. The poet then mysteriously alludes to two different forms of the god, which may (or may not) correspond to two different names. The hymn does not resolve these questions, perhaps leaving the shadowy figure of Viṣṇu to be fully developed in the ensuing centuries.

1. Now the mortal desiring to gain gets his share, if he does pious service to wide-ranging Viṣṇu,

will set the sacrifice in motion with fully focused mind, and will seek to attract here such a one, favorable to men.

2. You, Viṣṇu, traveling your ways—give benevolent thought destined for all people, concentrated thought,
so that you will give us our fill of abundant welfare, of greatly glittering wealth in horses.
3. Three times did the quick god stride with his greatness across this earth worth a hundred verses.
Let Viṣṇu be preeminent, stronger than the strong, for vibrant is the name of this stalwart one.
4. Quick Viṣṇu strode across this earth for a dwelling place for Manu, showing his favor.
Firmly fixed are his peoples, (even) the weak. He, affording good birth, has made (them) wide dwelling.
5. This name of yours, o Śipiviṣṭa, of you the stranger do I proclaim today, I who know the (hidden) patterns.
I hymn you, the strong—I, less strong—you who rule over this dusky realm in the distance.
6. Was (this speech) of yours to be disregarded, when you proclaimed of yourself: "I am Śipiviṣṭa"?
Do not hide away this shape from us, when you have appeared in another form in the clash.
7. I make the *vaṣaṭ*-cry to you from my mouth, Viṣṇu. Enjoy this oblation of mine, Śipiviṣṭa.
Let my lovely praises, my hymns strengthen you. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.101 (617) Parjanya

Kumāra Āgneya or Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Dedicated to Parjanya, the god of thunder, this hymn celebrates the fructifying rain in sometimes cryptic and riddling terms, which probably involve simultaneous natural and ritual reference. The number three is a recurrent theme: the "three speeches" of verse 1; the "triply layered" shelter and "triply turned" light of verse 2; the three heavens, three stages of flowing water, and three buckets of verse 4. There is also, as often with Ṛgvedic atmospheric phenomena, gender ambiguity and gender shifting. The bull of verse 1 creates a calf as his embryo. In verse 3 an unidentified subject (though surely Parjanya) is sometimes a barren cow and sometimes gives birth. (The "he" of the translation is a necessary English compromise: the Sanskrit has no pronominal subject and therefore no gender identifier.) Later in that verse the father provides milk to the mother. As is often the case with Ṛgvedic enigmas, it is

likely that there is no one correct answer to the riddles, which are instead meant to stimulate creative speculation.

1. Speak forth the three speeches with light at their front, which milk this udder milking out honey.
   Creating the calf, the embryo of the plants [=Agni], as soon as he is born the bull sets to bellowing.
2. The one who is the increaser of plants, who of the waters, who, as god, holds sway over the whole moving world,
   he will extend triply layered sheltering shelter, triply turned very superior light to us.
3. Sometimes he becomes a barren cow, sometimes he gives birth; he has fashioned his own body as he wished.
   The mother accepts the milk of the father. With it the father grows strong, with it the son.
4. In whom all the creatures abide, (in whom) the three heavens; (in whom) the waters have flowed in three stages—
   (his) three buckets for pouring drip an abundance of honey all around.
5. Here is a speech for Parjanya the self-ruling: let it be the intimate of his heart. He will enjoy it.
   Let there be joy-bringing rain for us; let the plants whose protectors are the gods be well-berried.
6. "The bull is the inseminator of each and every (plant). In him is the life-breath of the moving (world) and of the still."
   Let this truth be protective of me for a hundred autumns. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.102 (618) Parjanya

Kumāra Āgneya or Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
3 verses: gāyatrī

As simple and straightforward an address to Parjanya as the preceding hymn was cryptic and complex.

1. To Parjanya sing forth—to the son of heaven who grants rewards.
   Let him seek pasturage for us.
2. Who creates the embryo of the plants, of the cows, of the steeds,
   of human women—Parjanya—
3. Just to him, in his mouth, pour a most honeyed oblation.
   He will make lasting refreshment for us.

VII.103 (619) Frogs

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
10 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 1

A rain charm, which cleverly matches accurate description of frogs noisily emerging from estivation and mating at the beginning of the rainy season with the behavior of priests at a particular ritual, the Pravargya (see esp. vss. 7–9). Although there has been much debate about whether this hymn satirizes priests by comparing them to frogs or instead is to be taken with deadly seriousness, the truth no doubt lies somewhere in between. The poet obviously took great delight in his skill at matching frog behavior with ritual behavior and is unlikely to have been unaware of the potentially comic aspects of the comparison; however, the explosive fertility of the frogs provides a model for similar increase in the human sphere, and therefore the comparison has a serious purpose.

Attention to modern studies of animal behavior allows us to see just how much careful observation of frogs lies behind the depiction of the frogs here, and understanding anuran mating habits deepens our understanding of the poem. (See Jamison 1993.) For example, the frog lying "like a dried-out leather bag" is a counterintuitively accurate representation of a frog in estivation: some really do go dormant and dry up during the dry season, and "adding water" plumps them up and revives them. Once revived, the chorus of frogs begins, the purpose of which is to draw female frogs to the males, who are vocalizing, for mating. This antiphonal chorus is described in verses 2–6. Since the calls of different species are quite distinctive (as sketched in vs. 6), the different cries serve to attract conspecific females to the appropriate male. The actual mating posture of frogs is described in verse 4: it involves the male approaching the female from behind and grasping her firmly for as long as it takes—which for some species can be quite awhile (days or weeks).

Another important aspect of the hymn is its comparison of the frog chorus to a pedagogical situation (see esp. vss. 3, 5), in which the father/teacher speaks and the pupils exactly repeat his utterance. This is the clearest and earliest depiction of pedagogy in ancient India and is an example of how our knowledge of everyday life at that time must be obliquely won. The most famous word in this hymn is found in verse 3, the phonologically aberrant *akhkhala* (underlying the so-called cvi-formation, *akhkhalī-[kṛ́tya]*). On the one hand, it would take a very austere interpreter, and a killjoy, not to recognize this as an onomatopoetic imitation of a froggy sound; on the other hand, in the inspired analysis of Paul Thieme (1954), this is, in Middle Indic guise, a representation of the word *akṣara* "syllable." What the frog pupils are doing is "making syllables," that is, repeating the utterance of the teacher verbatim, as sound, not meaning. This is a pedagogical technique that endures to this day in traditional Vedic learning. It is also telling that the word *akhkhala* is in Middle Indic form, as the everyday language of the Ṛgvedic poets, and especially of their wives and children, had most likely already undergone many

of the phonological and morphological changes characteristic of Middle Indic, but only found in preserved texts from a much later period. Instruction of the young, as well as most ordinary conversation, was no doubt carried out in this language rather than in the high Vedic Sanskrit of the hymns.

As for the ritual application, the Pravargya rite occurs after a year-long consecration, like that referred to in verse 1 and brought to an end in verses 7–9. The most salient feature of the Pravargya is the offering of the gharma drink, referred to specifically in verses 8–9, the heated milk-offering that boils until it overflows. The last, and most important, implicit comparison between frogs and priests turns on this ritual offering: the prodigious discharge of eggs after anuran mating, especially by many pairs simultaneously, must have reminded the poet of the frothy bubbling overflow of the boiling milk. And since the thousands of eggs released are a tangible sign of fertility and increase, the frogs are seen as assuring increase for us as well, in the final verse (10), culminating in the "Pressing of Thousands."

Oldenberg suggests that that this hymn was added at this point in the Maṇḍala, just after the two Parjanya hymns (VII.101–2), because of the presence of Parjanya in the first verse. It is certainly appropriate for the rainy season.

1. Having lain still for a year, (like) brahmins following their commandment,
   the frogs have spoken forth a speech quickened by Parjanya.
2. When the heavenly waters have come to him, lying like a dried leather bag in the pond,
   like the bellow of cows with their calves, the call of the frogs comes together here.
3. When it has rained on them, who are yearning and thirsting, when the rainy season has come,
   saying "akhkhala" [/repeating syllables] like a son to a father (at lessons), one goes up close to the other who is speaking.
4. One of the two grasps the other from behind, when they have become exhilarated in the discharge of the waters,
   when the frog, rained upon, has hopped and hopped, and the speckled one mixes his speech with the green one.
5. Once one of them speaks the speech of the other, like a pupil that of his teacher,
   (then) a whole section of them speaks as if in unison, when you of good speech speak amid the waters.
6. One of them has a cow's bellow, one a goat's bleat; one is speckled, one green.
   Bearing the same name but different forms, they ornament their voice in many ways as they speak.
7. Like brahmins at an "Overnight" soma ritual, speaking around (a soma vessel) full like a pond,

you cycle around to that day of the year, which, o frogs, is the one marking the rainy season.

8. The brahmins, having soma, have made speech, creating their yearly sacred formulation.
   The Adhvaryus, having the hot ritual milk-drink (at the Pravargya ritual), sweating, become visible; none are hidden.
9. They guarded the godly establishment of the twelve(-month); these men do not confound the season.
   In a year, when the rainy season has come, the heated ritual milk-drinks obtain their own release.
10. The one with a cow's bellow has given, the one with a goat's bleat has given, the speckled one has given, the green one (has given) us goods.
    The frogs, giving hundred of cows, lengthened (their/our) life at a "Pressing of Thousands."

VII.104 (620) Destroying Demons, Using Imprecations and Curses. Indra and Soma (1–7, 15, 25), Indra (8, 16, 19–22, 24), Soma (9, 12–13), Agni (10, 14), Gods (11), Pressing Stones (17), Maruts (18), Vasiṣṭha's Hopes for Himself (23ab), Earth and Midspace (23cd)

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
25 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–6, 18, 21, 23; anuṣṭubh 25; jagatī or triṣṭubh 7

This long and rambling hymn coming at the very end of the VIIth Maṇḍala is obviously an addition to the original collection, not only on formal grounds but on those of content. Not a praise hymn, it calls upon a series of gods and other powers to destroy all manner of threats to us, in all manner of creatively bloodthirsty ways. It therefore has more in common with what we might term the "instrumental" hymns of the Atharvaveda than with the R̥gvedic manner, and it is in fact found in almost identical form as Atharvaveda Śaunaka VIII.4 and in Atharvaveda Paippalāda XVI. The relentless focus on the elimination of evildoers and the changes rung on the methods of destroying them can give an impression of homogeneity, despite the number of different gods called on (mostly Indra and Soma, but with a number of others interspersed: see the Anukramaṇī ascriptions above).

Nonetheless smaller divisions can be discerned within the hymn as a whole. The mood is set by verse 1, with no fewer than eight violent imperatives addressed to Indra and Soma, urging action against the wicked. The first five verses follow the same pattern: an initial vocative *índrāsomā* "o Indra and Soma," followed by imperatives addressed to those gods. The sixth verse starts the same, with the vocative, but continues somewhat differently: rather than ordering the gods to unleash their powers in yet another way, the poet expresses the hope that his own thought (and its verbal expression) will envelop the gods like horse-tackle. This prayer-offering

and the sacred formulations (*bráhman*) that Indra and Soma are urged to quicken in pāda d brings the brutal first section to a more benign and R̥gvedic conclusion.

Verse 7 is also addressed to Indra and Soma, also in the vocative, but with the vocative postponed till the beginning of the second half of the verse. This slight change in structure allows this verse to serve as a transition to the next subsection, which continues, in our opinion, through verse 11 and is defined by a ring provided by the preverb *práti* "against, in response to," opening 7a and 11c. Though the demands for action continue in this section, they take a more personal turn. In the first section, the gods were simply ordered to destroy evildoers; in this section the target is evildoers who act *against us* (as the *práti* signals). These verses all posit an innocent victim (usually 1st person) of the malefactor who is to be destroyed by the gods. Moreover, the avengers are no longer just Indra and Soma in tandem; each verse has a different designated hitter: just Indra in 8, Soma in 9, Agni in 10, and the gods in general in 11. The nature of the offenses has also become more sharply defined, in that the transgressions involve evil or false speech (even the "cheat" of vss. 10–11 means literally "desire to deceive"). Although evil speech and hostility to sacred speech were already found in verse 2, these linguistic offenses were only some of the condemned activities in the first section; they are the only ones here.

In the two next verses (12–13), speech, true and false, is foregrounded, and the punishment of the speaker of falsehood is reassuringly affirmed. But the mood changes abruptly in verse 14: the speaker seems to stand accused of the very offenses he called upon the gods to punish; the innocent 1st persons of verses 7–11 are the objects of Agni's anger. The aborted conditional clause of 14ab seems to convey the speaker's distress. In verses 15–16 the speaker swears a dramatic oath concerning the truth of his denial and calls down further destruction on the man who falsely accused him. The accusation is that he is a *yātu(dhā́na)*, a "sorcerer." The speaker's ringing assertion of his innocence and his powerful curse against his accuser brings this section of the hymn to a resounding conclusion.

Indeed, we are of the opinion that the rest of the hymn was simply tacked onto what precedes because it concerns sorcerers, using the same word *yātu*, and similar demonic beings. The tone of the remainder (vss. 17–25) is very different, with the theme of true and false speech recessive. The enemies are sorcerers in various animal forms, and the sense of personal menace and of human evildoing is almost entirely absent. Nonetheless, even if we are correct that these nine verses were originally independent, the fact that the full hymn was transmitted independently in the R̥gveda and both recensions of the Atharvaveda would indicate that the join was made early.

The Indian tradition (and many Western commentators, including Geldner) reads Vasiṣṭha's biography into the dramatic middle of the hymn, interpreting the accusation and denial in verses 15–16 as evidence for the hostility between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra found in much later texts. In this interpretation Viśvāmitra is the accuser, and Vasiṣṭha the outraged 1st-person speaker. Needless to say, there is absolutely no evidence for this in the hymn itself, and no evidence for the

Vasiṣṭha–Viśvāmitra feud elsewhere in the R̥gveda. It is always necessary to be wary about "reading backward" into the R̥gveda and other Vedic texts.

1. Indra and Soma, scorch the demonic force, crush it! Pin down those who grow strong in darkness, you bulls.
   Pound aside the unobservant ones, burn them down. Smite, shove, grind down the voracious.
2. Indra and Soma, like a pot on the fire let your evil heat seethe against the one who speaks evil.
   Set forth unrelenting hatred against the hater of the sacred formulation, the eater of raw flesh, the one with a terrible glance—against the worm-eater.
3. Indra and Soma, spear the evil-doers within their hole out into darkness that offers nothing to hold onto,
   so that no one at all will come up from there again. Let this power of yours, full of battle fury, be for vanquishing.
4. Indra and Soma, make the crushing weapon of death roll from heaven and from earth toward the one who speaks evil.
   Fashion a reverberating (weapon) up out of the mountains, with which you grind down the demonic force that has been growing strong.
5. Indra and Soma, make it roll from heaven. With fire-heated (weapons) that smite like stones,
   with unaging (weapons) whose murderous force is searing heat, spear the voracious ones down into a deep place. Let them go to silence.
6. Indra and Soma, let this thought here encircle you on all sides, like a girth-band two prizewinning horses—
   the thought that, as ritual offering [/invocation], I impel around you, with wisdom (as the goad). Like lords of men, quicken these sacred formulations.
7. Keep (this) in mind! With your thrusting ways smite the deceits of the demon with his wreckage.
   Indra and Soma, let there be no good passage for the evildoer who with his deceit ever shows hostility against us.
8. Whoever bears witness against me with untruthful words, as I behave with guileless mind,
   like waters grabbed in a fist, let the speaker of nothing come to nothing, Indra.
9. Those who distort (my) guileless speech in their (usual) ways, or who spoil an auspicious one according to their wont,
   let Soma give them over to the serpent or set them in the lap of Dissolution.
10. Whoever wishes to cheat us of the essence of food, o Agni, or of our horses, of our cows, of our bodies,

let the swindling thief who does the theft go to insignificance. Let him be bent double, along with his life and lineage.

11. Let him be far in the distance, along with his life and lineage; let him be beneath all three earths.
    Let his glory dry up, o gods—whoever wishes to cheat us by day and whoever by night.
12. Good discrimination is (easy) for the perceptive man: the two (types of) speech, true and untrue, contend with each other.
    Which of the two is true, whichever is straighter, just that Soma aids—he smites the untrue.
13. Truly, Soma does not promote the crooked man, nor one who sustains his rule perversely.
    He smites demonic force; he smites one who speaks what is untrue. Both lie in the toils of Indra.
14. If I were a man with false gods, or if I call upon the gods wrongly, o Agni. . . .
    Why are you angry at us, Jātavedas? Let those whose speech is deceitful to you attend upon dissolution.
15. Let me die today if I am a sorcerer, or if I have scorched the lifespan of a man.
    And he should be separated from ten (generations of?) heroes, whoever says falsely to me: "you sorcerer."
16. Who says to me, who am without sorcery, "you sorcerer," or who, (though) a demon, says "I am pure,"
    let Indra smite him with a great weapon of death. Let him fall lowest of all creation.
17. She who goes forth by night like a nightjar [?], concealing her own body by deceit,
    she should fall down into holes without end. Let the pressing stones smash the demons with their tramplings.
18. Spread out among the clans, Maruts. Seek, grab, crush together the demons—
    the ones who, having become birds, fly through the nights, or those who have deployed their swindles at the divine ceremony.
19. Roll the stone forth from heaven, Indra; hone the soma-honed one entirely, bounteous one.
    From in front, from behind, from below, from above, strike at the demons with the mountain.
20. These very dog-sorcerers are flying. Those inclined to deceit desire to deceive Indra, the undeceivable.
    The able one is honing his weapon of death for the slanderers. Now he discharges the missile toward the sorcerers.

21. Indra has become the one who pounds aside the sorcerers, the oblation-stealers, those who seek to ambush.
 The able one, splitting them like an axe a tree, breaking them like pots, advances against those who are really demons.
22. The owl-sorcerer, the owlet-sorcerer—smash them, and the dog-sorcerer and the wolf-sorcerer,
 the eagle-sorcerer and the vulture-sorcerer. As if with a mill-stone, pulverize the demonic power, Indra.
23. Don't let the demonic power of the sorcerers reach us. Let (Dawn) banish with her dawning the pair that are worm-eaters.
 Let Earth protect us from earthly constraint; let the Midspace protect us from heavenly (constraint).
24. Indra, smash the male sorcerer and the female exulting in her magic power.
 Let the no-necks with feckless gods shake to pieces. Let them not look upon the sun as it rises.
25. Look on; look out: Indra and Soma, be vigilant.
 Hurl the weapon of death at the demonic forces, the missile at the sorcerers.

VIII

Maṇḍala VIII

Maṇḍala VIII is organized into small groups of hymns attributed to a single poet or a set of closely related poets. Within each group, the hymns are organized by divinity and meter and length of hymn. As noted in the general introduction, two poetic lineages predominate, that of the Kāṇvas, especially in the first two-thirds of the maṇḍala, and that of the Āṅgirases in the last third, although the Anukramaṇī attributes some hymns to poets belonging to neither lineage and in addition Kāṇva hymns appear in the Āṅgirasa section and vice versa. The Kāṇva/Āṅgirasa identification links Maṇḍala VIII with Maṇḍala I, where poets of these families are prominent. Inserted in the middle of the maṇḍala are the apocryphal or "half-apocryphal" Vālakhilya hymns (VIII.49–59), appearing between the sixth and seventh anuvākas of the maṇḍala. Although these were supplements to the R̥gveda collection, they were transmitted with it and transmitted with accents, unlike the other khilāni, the other appendices to the saṃhitā text. For further on the structure and affiliations of VIII, see especially Oldenberg (1888: 209–19) and Hopkins (1896).

Many of the hymns in VIII are made up of strophes consisting of two or three verses (pragāthas and tr̥cas respectively), in various meters. Quite long hymns can be thus assembled, and there is often more coherence within the strophes than between the strophes. These strophic structures were especially associated with the sung portions of the ritual, whose principal priest in the classic śrauta ritual was the Udgātar, the priest of the Sāmaveda, into which many of the verses of Maṇḍala VIII were borrowed. Thus the VIIIth Maṇḍala seems to have a liturgical function somewhat separate from the rest of the saṃhitā.

Unlike the rigid divinity order in the Family Books, where Agni hymns always precede Indra hymns, the ordering within the hymn groups is more various, with Indra often leading off. Indeed Indra is the dominant god of the maṇḍala: of the ninety-two non-Vālakhilya hymns, exactly half, forty-six, are dedicated to him alone, with a further two to Indra and Agni jointly. Moreover, six of the eleven Vālakhilya hymns are Indra's, in addition to a joint Indra-Varuṇa hymn. Agni is, by contrast, rather muted in the book: only fourteen hymns belong to him alone. The Aśvins are relatively well represented, with eleven hymns and parts of several others. The Ādityas also have a presence, with three hymns to them as a group, one to Mitra and Varuṇa, and one to Varuṇa alone, as well as a substantial part of the

composite hymns VIII.42 and 101 and of the All God hymns VIII.27 and 83. The Maruts receive three hymns, Soma two (of the few Soma hymns outside of IX), but the minor gods are almost invisible in this maṇḍala except in incidental mentions in All God hymns.

There are many high points and striking features in this sprawling maṇḍala, of which we can mention only a few. From a ritual point of view, VIII.31, which treats the household pair, provides the only clear R̥gvedic mention of the Sacrificer's Wife, whom we consider a ritual innovation in late R̥gveda. Another likely sociocultural innovation, the explicit organization of the three Ārya varṇas, the social classes of brahmin, kṣatriya, and vaiśya, is obliquely referred to in the trio of hymns VIII.35–37. On the mythological side, the story of Indra, Viṣṇu, and the Emuṣa boar, found in later brāhmaṇa texts, is mentioned several times in this maṇḍala, with a fairly coherent account of it given in VIII.77. Perhaps the single most striking hymn in VIII is the Apālā sūkta, VIII.91, in which a barely pubescent girl conducts a private soma sacrifice for Indra. A particularly beautifully structured hymn is the All God riddle hymn, VIII.29. Finally, one of the most salient features of the maṇḍala is the number of dānastutis, including some of the most notable in the R̥gveda.

Although the first five hymns of VIII (VIII.1–5) are attributed to a variety of poets, as Oldenberg discusses (1888: 214) they appear to belong together because of the similarity of the names of the poets assigned by the Anukramaṇī, the regular appearance of a dānastuti, and the connection of the names of the Kaṇvas and Priyamedhas.

VIII.1 (621) Indra (1–29), Dānastuti of Āsaṅga (30–33), Āsaṅga (34)

Pragātha Kāṇva (formerly Pragātha Ghaura, brother and adoptive son of Kaṇva) (1–2), Medātithi Kāṇva and Medhyātithi (3–29), Āsaṅga Plāyogi (30–33), Śaśvatī Āṅgirasī, wife of Āsaṅga (34)
34 verses: br̥hatī, except satobr̥hatī 2–4, triṣṭubh 33–34

The structure of this hymn is metrically complex; indeed Oldenberg despairs of it. It begins with two pragāthas (vss. 1–4, br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī) and ends with two triṣṭubhs (vss. 33–34). In between are twenty-eight br̥hatī verses, whose organization is unclear. Oldenberg is inclined to assume an overall tr̥ca structure, which has been disturbed—and indeed some of whose verses have been lost, as he believes. Geldner, on the other hand, sees paired verses (continuing the pragāthas of 1–4) in verses 5–20, tr̥cas in verses 21–29 and the dānastuti (vss. 30–33), with the final verse (34) falling outside these structures. It is also important to note that this hymn violates one of the principles of arrangement in the VIIIth Maṇḍala, whereby within each poet's collection all hymns to the same deity are grouped together in order of descending number of verses: our VIII.1 has thirty-four verses, whereas

VIII.2, also to Indra, has forty-two. This discrepancy is one of the pieces of evidence that led Oldenberg to suggest that some verses had been lost in VIII.1.

In any case the metrical particulars do not help in discerning the thematic structure. The one indisputable fact is that the last four verses (30–34) stand apart from the rest of the hymn: verses 30–33 form a dānastuti, and the striking final verse (34) belongs to the same level of colloquial discourse as the three immediately preceding verses and may in fact be part of the dānastuti (see below). The rest of the hymn is devoted to Indra, but there is very little sustained praise of the god and almost no mythology (apart from a few glancing references in vss. 11 and 28). Most of the Indra portion falls roughly into the genres of "journey" hymn and invitation to the soma sacrifice, but as often in Indra hymns there is concern that Indra will go elsewhere for his soma. The first ten verses develop this theme, but with somewhat slangy language (e.g., "having it both ways," vs. 2; "keep crisscrossing," vs. 4) and with an intimate and almost teasing approach to the god, as when the poet in verse 5 promises that he won't "hand over" Indra even in return for a great sum. But the anxiety that Indra will pass by his sacrifice is clear, especially in verses 3–4, 7; this theme recurs in verses 13–16, and, even in the following verses devoted to the soma preparation and the god's response (17–22), in verse 20 the poet expresses his fear that he might anger Indra with his importunings. The themes of the journey and the invitation to soma are repeated once more in verses 23–27, and verse 27 ends with a strong affirmation that Indra *will* come to our sacrifice, thus ending the repeated doubts expressed earlier in the hymn. Two more verses (28–29), paired by their repeated fronted pronouns, bring the Indra part of the hymn to a close.

Thus the hymn keeps circling around certain topics, while other common features of Indra hymns such as mythological references are absent; nonetheless, there is little in the way of formal structure or organized presentation. Moreover, the striking turns of phrase found in the earlier parts of the hymn are less frequent in the later parts, with one exception: verse 12. This baffling verse is found also in the Atharvaveda in the wedding hymn (AVŚ XIV.2.47). It seems to depict Indra as a wondrous physician, in most interpretations: without even touching it he sticks together a breach, perhaps a wound, which was perhaps made by a missile, before the missile, if that's what it is, pierces through to the collarbones. The translation given here is provisional, and it is not at all clear to us why the verse is found in this hymn or what it really refers to.

The dānastuti (vss. 30–33) is notable for a number of reasons, not least that it mentions several different patrons. The "praises of the gift" are characteristically obliquely expressed. But the oddest verse in the hymn, and indeed one of the oddest verses in the R̥gveda, is the final one, verse 34. In it a woman (identified as Śaśvatī by the Anukramaṇī, but we prefer to take that word as an attributive adjective) expresses happy surprise at the sight of the penis of an unidentified man. There is no context for this vignette of sexual encounter with its snatch of provocative direct speech. The later tradition (Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra XVI.11.17, Br̥haddevatā VI.41) considers the female to be the wife of Āsaṅga, the patron mentioned in the immediately

preceding verse (33), who had become a woman but was turned back into a man thanks (according to the Bṛhaddevatā) to the poet Medhyātithi. But this explanation seems a desperate makeshift and the complex gender switching entirely invented. It seems more likely that the verse belongs to the dānastuti, and in an even more oblique expression than those that precede it, it "praises the gift" of a woman to the poet (women are often mentioned as part of the poet's spoils: see the final verse of the next hymn, VIII.2.42) by alluding to the enthusiastic response of his new prize to his sexual advances. (The poet thereby also obliquely praises his own equipment.)

1. Don't praise anything else! Comrades, don't do yourselves harm.
   Praise only Indra the bull when (the soma) is pressed, and right now pronounce your solemn recitations—
2. Him, rumbling loudly like a bull, unaging, conquering territory as if (conquering) cow(s);
   making both: division by hate and unions by love—having it both ways, the most munificent one.

3. For even though these peoples now, every man for himself, call upon you for help,
   let it be our sacred formulation, Indra, that becomes your strengthening now and throughout all days.
4. O bounteous one, the poetic inspirations, those attentive to poetic inspiration—the ones belonging to the stranger (and those belonging) to (our) peoples—keep crisscrossing each other.
   Hop to! Bring here (to be) nearest a prize of many forms, for help.

5. Not even for a great exchange gift would I hand you over, you possessor of the stone,
   not for a thousand, not for ten thousand, you possessor of the mace, not for a hundred, you of a hundred rewards.
6. You are better for me, Indra, than a father and than a brother who benefits not.
   You and a mother seem to me to be alike, o you who are good for goods and largesse.
7. Where have you gone? Where are you? For surely your mind is in many places.
   Are you on the rise?—you fighter, creator of tumult, cleaver of strongholds. They have sung forth their songs.
8. Chant forth a song to him who cleaves strongholds for his favorite—
   (it is songs) because of which the mace-wielder will travel to sit upon the ritual grass of Kāṇva and split fortresses.
9. Those of yours which bring ten cows, which bring a hundred, a thousand,
   those horses of yours which are swift-running bulls, with these come swiftly to us.

10. Today I summon the juice-yielding (cow), pulsing with excitement from the songs,
    Indra, the good milker, the lead milk-cow, the broad-streamed refreshment, who gets it right.
11. When he gave a push to Etaśa, (the steed) of the Sun, and to the two far-wandering winged (steeds) of the Wind,
    he of a hundred resolves conveyed Kutsa, the son of Arjuna. He crept up on the Gandharva, who was not to be laid low.
12. He [=Indra] who, even without a bandage, before (the missile) drills into the collarbones,
    joins together the join—he, the bounteous one with many goods: he makes what has gone awry right again.
13. May we not be like outsiders, like foreigners to you, Indra.
    Like trees left behind (by woodcutters), we have considered ourselves poor at burning, you possessor of the stone.
14. Indeed we have considered ourselves neither swift nor strong, you Vr̥tra-smasher.
    But in an instant, through your great generosity, o champion, we could (again) take delight in your praise.
15. If he will listen to my praise, let our (soma-)drops invigorate Indra,
    when they have run swift across the filter, they that strengthen the son of Tugra [=Bhujyu].
16. Come here today to the joint praise from your favorite and comrade.
    Let the invitatory praise of the bounteous ones help you forward. Then I am eager for good praise for you.
17. Once you (priests) have pressed the soma with the stones, rinse it in the waters.
    The superior men, garbing (it) in cows [=milk] as if in garments, will milk (it) out from the belly.
18. (Coming) then from earth or then from heaven, from the lofty realm of light,
    by this my song become strong in your own body. Bring created things to fullness, o you of strong resolve.
19. For Indra press well the most invigorating soma worthy to be chosen.
    The potent one [=Indra] will swell him who is spurred on, like a prize-seeking (horse), by every insight.
20. I, always begging you with my song—with the gush [?] of soma let me not
    anger you, frenzied like a wild beast, at the soma-pressings. Who will not beg his master?
21. (Begging) the mighty one with his mighty power for his exhilaration roused by the exhilarating drink,
    the one triumphant over all when roused to exhilaration—for in his exhilaration he always gives to us.

22. In his treasury are many desirable things. The god (will grant them) to the pious mortal;
    he will grant to him who presses and to him who praises—(the god) who is welcomed by all, praised by the stranger.
23. Drive here, Indra—find your invigoration (here)—together with your bright bounty, o god.
    Fill your belly, like a lake, broad and fat with soma juices drunk in common.
24. Here let a thousand, here let a hundred, yoked to a golden chariot—
    the long-maned fallow bays, yoked by a sacred formulation—convey you to drink the soma, o Indra.
25. Here let the two fallow bays (yoked) to the golden chariot, those with peacock tails
    and white backs, convey you to drink of the honey, of the strengthening stalk.
26. Drink of this pressed (soma), you who long for songs, like the first drinker [=Vāyu].
    This pressed drink of the juicy, thoroughly prepared (soma), cherished for invigoration, acts the lord.
27. He who is unique through his wondrous skill, the great and mighty one is dominant through his commandments.
    The fair-lipped one will come—he will not stay away, he will come here. He will not avoid our call.
28. You crushed completely the roving fortress of Śuṣṇa with your deadly weapons.
    You followed the light, (and shall) once again, when, Indra, you will become the one to be summoned.
29. Mine are the praises when the sun has risen, mine at the day's midday,
    mine in the evening at the border of night, that have turned you here, o good one.

30. Praise (them)! Just praise (them)! They are the most bounteous of bounty among your bounteous ones:
    Ninditāśva, Prapathin, and Paramajyā, o Medhyātithi.
31. When with trust in the winning horses I mount on the chariot,
    of the valuable goods what will stand out is the livestock coming from Yadu.
32. Who has bounteously given two silvery (horses) to me, together with a golden hide,
    let him be dominant over all auspicious things—Svanadratha, (son of) Āsaṅga.
33. Then Āsaṅga, the son of Playoga, will give more than others, o Agni, by ten thousand.
    Then for me ten gleaming bullocks emerged, like reeds from a pond.

34. His thick (member) has become visible in front along its length—a
 boneless thigh hanging down.
 His woman, ever ready, having caught sight of it, says, "My lord, you're
 bringing (me) an excellent treat!"

VIII.2 (622) Indra (1–40), Vibhindu's Dānastuti (41–42)

Medhātithi Kāṇva and Priyamedha Āṅgirasa (1–40), Medhātithi Kāṇva (41–42)
42 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 28, arranged in tr̥cas.

As noted above, this hymn has considerably more verses than the preceding one, and is therefore apparently out of sequence. The discrepancy in length between the two hymns is one reason Oldenberg suggests that VIII.1 may have lost verses in transmission. (See the introduction to the preceding hymn.)

As indicated by the Anukramaṇī, the majority of the hymn is devoted to Indra, with the final verses a dānastuti; however, despite the Anukramaṇī's division, the dānastuti must begin with verse 40, not 41, both because of the tr̥ca division and on grounds of content and tone. In the Indra portion the focus remains almost exclusively on the preparation of soma in its various forms, and the hope that Indra will come to our sacrifice, drink of our soma, and reward us. As often in such hymns, there is a journey component (esp. vss. 19, 26–28), and underlying the calls to Indra to journey to our sacrifice is the worry that Indra will stay away from our sacrifice because of anger or the appeals of other sacrificers (vss. 5–6, 19–20). There are also some slight indications that the hymn is concerned with a ritual innovation being introduced in some of the R̥gvedic clans, the Third Pressing, which takes place in the evening and involves soma mixed with milk. There are two occurrences of the word *ā́śir* "milk-mixture" (vss. 10, 11; see also 9b [*ā́śir* is also found twice in VIII.31, which also seems to contain references to Third Pressing]), and verse 18 seems to imply that the gods themselves are not satisfied with a soma sacrifice that ends with the Midday Pressing. The emphasis on the number three (esp. vss. 7–9, 21) may also support this interpretation, as may the hope expressed that Indra will not spend his evening away from us (vs. 20).

Aside from the thematic unity of some of the tr̥cas (e.g., vss. 7–9 on the three types of soma), this long first section of the hymn has little apparent structure, and it is also notable for its lack of mythological reference (beyond a few token mentions of Vr̥tra, vss. 26, 31, 36). But throughout this section there are unusual similes (e.g., vss. 6, 12, 17, 19, 20) and turns of phrase, including some untranslatable grammatical and lexical puns (as in vs. 3). The loose texture and the lightness and transparency of the meter also help to make it an appealing piece.

The dānastuti (vss. 40–42) is, as often, hard to interpret. In verse 40 the actor seems still to be Indra, who in the guise of a ram had some sort of interaction with Medhyātithi: the language here is unclear, and although there are various treatments of Medhātithi (*sic*) and Indra as ram in the Brāhmaṇa literature, these seem desperate attempts to make sense of the fleeting and mysterious reference here. Though it

appears to be Indra who is addressed in a subordinate clause in the 2nd person in verse 40, the 2nd person reference has shifted in verse 41 to Vibindhu, apparently the human patron. Perhaps Indra's generosity is being superimposed on this human patron. The final verse, 42, like the final verse of the dānastuti in VIII.1 (vs. 34), concludes the hymn with a sexual innuendo: two "daughters of joy" (a phrase that goes neatly into French as *filles de joie* "prostitutes") have also been given to the poet. These may indeed be two women, but since they are called "milk-strong," it is quite possible that the poet is referring to the two breasts of one woman. If so, this verse responds directly to VIII.1.34, where the woman of the poet praises his member, and recalls IV.32.22-24, with a likewise disguised reference to the breasts of a woman given to the poet in payment for his verse.

1. This pressed stalk, o good one—drink your belly well full—
   have we given to you, o you who bring no threat.
2. Rinsed by men, pressed by stones, purified by the sheep's fleece,
   washed like a horse in the rivers—
3. Preparing it with cows [=milk], we have made it sweet for you, like
      barley (enjoyed) by cows.
   Indra, (we have made) you (to be) at this joint revelry.

4. It's just Indra who is the lone drinker of soma, Indra the lifelong
      drinker of the pressings
   among gods and mortals,
5. Whom neither the clear [=unmixed] nor the poorly mixed nor the
      (juices) that are sharp
   keep away—him of broad extent whose heart is good—
6. When those other than us go hunting him with cows, like
      (self-)choosing women hunting (husbands),
   and creep up on him with their milk-cows.

7. Let the three somas be pressed for the god Indra,
   for the soma-drinker in (our) own dwelling.
8. Three buckets drip and three cups are well filled
   at the same presentation.
9. You are clear, outstanding among many; (and you are) mixed with milk
      in the middle;
   and (you, mixed) with curd, (are) the most invigorating for the champion.

10. These soma-drinks are yours, Indra, the sharp ones pressed among us.
    The clear ones beg for the milk mixture.
11. Prepare these: the milk mixture, the offering cake, and this soma here,
       o Indra,
    for I hear that you are endowed with riches.
12. When they have been drunk, they fight each other within the heart, like
       those badly intoxicated on liquor.
    Like the naked in the cold they stay awake.

13. Rich indeed should be the praiser of a rich benefactor like you,
 and far(-famed) indeed (the praiser) of a famous one, o possessor of the fallow bays.
14. Never does the stranger pay attention to a solemn speech being recited if it comes from a man without cattle,
 nor to a song being sung.
15. Don't hand us over to a taunter, Indra, nor to one who vaunts himself.
 Do your best (for us), able one, with your abilities.

16. We have just this aim: as comrades devoted to you, Indra,
 the Kaṇvas sing to you with their solemn words.
17. I express admiration at nothing else, mace-bearer. Like workmen at their labor,
 it's just *your* praise song to which I pay attention.
18. The gods seek a presser. They are not eager for sleep.
 Tireless, they go to exhilaration.

19. Drive forth here with prizes. Stop being angry at us,
 like a great man with a young wife.
20. Let him not (be) filled with evil rage. Will he spend his evening at a distance from us
 like a son-in-law down on his luck?
21. For we know the much-giving benevolence of him,
 the hero,
 and the thoughts of him who was born in the three.

22. Pour here the Kaṇvas' (soma). We know no one more glorious than him swelling with strength,
 than him who has a hundred forms of help.
23. With the most superior (might), o presser, bring the soma to Indra, to the able hero.
 He will drink for manly strength—
24. He who among the unwavering is the best at finding the prize that brings horses for the singers,
 that brings cattle for the praisers.

25. Pressers, rinse the soma that is ever to be admired for the one to be exhilarated,
 for the hero, the champion.
26. The Vr̥tra-smasher, the drinker of the pressed (soma) will come. Not far from us
 will he stop, the one with a hundred forms of help.
27. Here, just here will his two capable fallow bays, yoked by the sacred formulation, carry our comrade,
 famed through songs, longing for songs.

28. The soma juices are sweet: drive here! The soma juices are prepared: drive here—
o you with (lovely) lips, accompanied by the seers, possessed of ability—on your own to the landing site, to the joint revelry.
29. The praises that strengthen you for great generosity and manly action,
o Indra, strengthening (you) as the decisive victor,
30. And the songs for you, o you whose vehicle is song, and the solemn words—these are for you—
those which have in every way deployed their powers.

31. Just so the powerfully ranging one with mace in hand is the only one to distribute the prizes of victory—indestructible from of old.
32. He is the smasher of Vr̥tra with his right (hand)—the many times much-called-upon Indra,
the great one with great powers,
33. In whom are all the settled domains and both exploits and expanses.
The (soma) invigorating for the bounteous (Indra) (follows) along.

34. He has done these things—Indra, who is famed beyond all things
as the giver of prizes to the bounteous (patrons).
35. Even from behind he brings to the fore the cattle-seeking chariot that he helps,
for he is the powerful conveyor of goods.
36. He is the winner as inspired poet and with his steeds, the smasher of Vr̥tra, the champion with his superior men,
the real helper of him who does honor.

37. Sacrifice to him, o Priyamedhas, with fully focused mind—to Indra,
whose exhilaration becomes real through the soma juices.
38. To the lord of the settlement whose fame is from song, whose desire is fame, who has much in himself,
to the prize-winner—sing, Kaṇvas!
39. Who as able comrade gave the cows, even though (they were) without tracks, to the superior men
who fixed their desire in him.

40. O possessor of the stone—him whose insights are to the point, Medhyātithi Kāṇva,
since you, having become a ram, led (him) to (goods)—
41. Do your best for him, o Vibhindu, giving him four ten thousands
and eight thousands beyond.
42. And these two dear little ones of mine, the milk-strong daughters of joy,
has he bounteously given to become my wives.

VIII.3 (623) Indra (1–20), Pākasthāman Kaurayāṇa's Dānastuti (21–24)

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
24 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, 1–20, arranged in pragāthas, anuṣṭubh 12, gāyatrī 22–23, bṛhatī 24

Like the previous two hymns, this one consists of a long praise of Indra (vss. 1–20) followed by a short dānastuti (21–24). The Indra portion is arranged in standard pragāthas, while the dānastuti is metrically more varied. The verse pairs of the pragāthas are for the most part internally unified, but like many of the longer hymns in VIII there is not much apparent structure in the hymn as a whole. There are, however, several recurrent themes: the greatness (*mahimán*) and vast power (*śávas*) of Indra (e.g., vss. 4, 6); the gods and poets who have previously celebrated Indra and have been helped by him (e.g., vss. 7–9, 16); and the sheer noise made by Indra's praisers (e.g., vss. 3, 7, 16, 18). In the context of all this previous poetic activity, verses 13 and 14 raise anxious questions about what constitutes the proper topic of praise poetry and how to configure these praises anew, the perennial problem of the Ṛgvedic bard.

The dānastuti is far easier to interpret than those of the previous two hymns: the patron Pākasthāman is celebrated for his gift of a particularly fine sorrel horse, given also by Indra and the Maruts. The first half of the last verse (24) seems to contain an adage, or adapted piece of folk wisdom, as a foil to further praise of the patron in the second half of the verse. The verse itself has a slight Pindaric ring.

1. Drink of the sap-filled pressed (soma). Reach exhilaration from our (soma) accompanied by cows, Indra.
   Become a friend, a feasting companion, for our strengthening. Let your insights help us.
2. We would be in the good favor of you, the prizewinner. Do not lay us low before hostility.
   Help us with your conspicuous powers to prevail. Keep us in your good thoughts.

3. Let these make you strong, you of many goods—the songs which are mine.
   Pure-colored, gleaming, attentive to poetic inspiration, they have cried out to (you) with their praises.
4. This one, created with might by a thousand seers, spreads wide like the sea.
   (When) realized, his greatness, his vast power is sung at sacrifices in the realm of the inspired poet.

5. It is just Indra for the sake of the divine assemblage, Indra as the ceremony advances,
   Indra whom we call upon when we are winning at the encounter—Indra, in order to gain the stake.
6. Indra by his greatness spread the two worlds and his vast power; Indra made the sun shine.
   Within Indra are all beings held and within Indra the pressed drops.

7. To you, for you to drink first, o Indra, with their praises the Āyus and
   the Ṛbhus united sounded together, and the Rudras sang (to you) as the foremost.
8. Indra increased his own bullish vast power in the exhilaration of the pressed (soma) in the company of Viṣṇu.
   Today the Āyus praise his greatness as in the earlier way.

9. I beg you for a mass of good heroes and for the sacred formulation to be first in your thought.
   That with which, when the stake was set, (you were there) for the Yatis and for Bhṛgu, with which you helped Praskaṇva,
10. With which you sent the great waters surging to the sea, that is your bullish vast power, Indra.
   In a single day that greatness of his cannot be fully attained, toward which the battle-cry has roared.

11. Muster your ability for us, Indra, when I beg you for wealth and a mass of good heroes.
   Muster your ability for the one striving to first win the prize. Muster your ability for the praise song, foremost one.
12. Muster your ability for us since you helped Paura (and help) the insights of this one striving to win, Indra.
   Muster your ability just as you furthered Ruśama, Śyāvaka, and Kṛpa possessing solar glory, Indra.

13. What among the unshakable things should a powerful mortal sing anew?
   For, (even though) singing the sun, they have not reached his greatness, his Indrian power.
14. Praising what will they be acting according to truth among the gods? Which inspired poet will be lauded as a seer?
   When will you come to the call of the man who presses, o bounteous Indra, when (to that) of the man who praises?

15. These most honeyed songs and praises rise up—
   entirely victorious, gaining the stake, possessing imperishable help, competing for the prize like chariots.

16. The Kaṇvas—like the Bhr̥gus, (themselves) like suns—have attained everything conceivable.
    Magnifying Indra with praises, the Āyus and Priyamedhas sounded.

17. Yoke up your pair of fallow bays, o Indra, best smiter of obstacles, from out of the far distance,
    (then,) o bounteous one, turned our way, come here, a mighty one with lofty (horses), to drink the soma.
18. For these bards, inspired poets, have bellowed for you for the winning of wisdom with their insight.
    You, o bounteous Indra longing for songs—like a tracker listen to our call.

19. You kicked Vr̥tra out from the lofty steppes, Indra.
    You drove (the cows) of Arbuda and the tricky Mr̥gaya out, out the cows of Parvata.
20. The fires shone out, out the sun, out the soma, the Indrian sap.
    You blew the great serpent out from the midspace: that manly act did you perform, Indra.

21. The one that Indra and the Maruts, that Pākasthāman, the son of Kurayāṇa, gave me—
    the most beautiful of all in body, like the one that runs in heaven [=sun]—
22. (That) sorrel has Pākasthāman given me,
    —good at the yoke-pole, filling his girthband, an awakener of wealth,
23. Alongside which the other ten draft-horses draw the yoke-pole
    home, like birds the son of Tugra.
24. Food is the lifebreath, garments the body, and anointment is the giver of strength.
    But as the fourth I have proclaimed Pākasthāman, the nurturing giver of the sorrel.

VIII.4 (624) Indra (1–14), Indra or Pūṣan (15–18), Kuruṅga's Dānastuti (19–21)

Devātithi Kāṇva
21 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas, except puraüṣṇih 21.

Like the previous hymn, this one is arranged in pragāthas. However, there is less internal cohesion in the verse pairs, but more discernible structure in their arrangement in the hymn. As noted in the Anukramaṇī the hymn falls into three major sections: the longest (vss. 1–14) devoted to Indra, the next (vss. 15–18) to Pūṣan, and the last (vss. 19–21) a dānastuti. The Indra portion opens with a pragātha (vss. 1–2) listing many

possible sacrificers that Indra might visit, and urging him to come to the Kaṇvas here. The next four pragāthas (vss. 3–10) form a ring composition, with verses 3/4 and 9/10 matched to each other: Indra as a thirsty animal coming to drink (3a, 10a) and his assumption of supreme power (4d, 10d). The remaining two pragāthas in this section (vss. 11–14) command the Adhvaryus to press soma for Indra. The actual content of the Indra section is conventional: praise of his powers and his help for mortals, invitations to journey here and drink the soma, with the invitation becoming more insistent toward the end. There are almost no mythological references (though the enigmatic first pāda of 8 seems to refer to the same event as III.32.11, where Indra wears the earth on his hip), and the usual pleas for gifts are essentially absent, replaced by indirection: descriptions of pious men who benefit from Indra.

The Pūṣan section (though the Anukramaṇī offers a choice of Indra or Pūṣan as the deity, it is clearly Pūṣan) makes the requests for gifts overt, and it serves as a transition to the dānastuti proper. The penultimate verse of the Pūṣan section (17) in fact seems to refer to a different Kaṇva poet, Pajra Sāman (see VIII.6.47), who has his own gifts to praise—as our poet turns to his own in verse 18, apparently sequestering his share of the cattle in a different pasture. The dānastuti (vss. 19–21) is fairly straightforward in its first two verses, but the final verse (21) is entirely opaque, at least to these translators.

1. When, Indra, you are being called forward or back, up or down, by men,
   you yourself, propelled by men, are many times in the company of the
   descendants of Anu, are in the company of Turvaśa, you vaunter.
2. Or when, Indra, in the company of Ruma, Ruśama, Syāvaka, or Kṛpa,
   you bring yourself to exhilaration,
   the Kaṇvas, whose vehicle is praise, guide you here with their sacred
   formulations, Indra. Come here!

3. As a thirsty buffalo goes down to a salt-pocket made by water,
   come swiftly here to us in friendship [/in the morning], in the evening. In
   the company of the Kaṇvas, drink up!
4. Let the drops exhilarate you, bounteous Indra, to give largesse to the
   presser.
   Having stolen the pressed soma, you drank it in a cup. (Then) you
   assumed this most superior might.

5. He put forward his might with might; he shattered battle fury with
   his power.
   All who seek battle, vigorous Indra, hold themselves down, like trees,
   before you.
6. He is accompanied by an ever-battling warrior as if by a thousand—
   whoever has achieved a praise-invocation for you.
   He puts his own son forward with a good twist amid an abundance of
   good heroes—(whoever) ritually serves with words of reverence.

7. Might we not fear, might we not grow weary in comradeship with you, the powerful one.
   A great deed of you the bull should be witnessed. Might we see Turvaśa and Yadu.
8. The bull wears (it [=the earth]) on his left hip. His giving is not resentful.
   The milk-cows are infused with the honey of the bees. Come here swiftly! Run! Drink!

9. Your comrade, o Indra, certainly has a horse and chariot, is lovely in form and rich in cows.
   He is always accompanied by the vigor of a swelling portion. Glittering, he drives to the assembly.
10. Like a thirsting antelope, come to the drinking hole. Drink the soma as you will.
   Pissing down day after day, o bounteous one, you have assumed the most powerful might.

11. Adhvaryu, make the soma run: Indra wants to drink.
   Now he has yoked his two bullish fallow bays and has come here, the Vr̥tra-smasher.
12. Even he himself considers himself a pious man at whose place you become sated on soma.
   Here is your food, ready for yoking, fully sprinkled: of it—come! run!—drink.

13. Adhvaryus, press the soma for Indra who stands on the chariot.
   The stones gaze out upon (the upper surface) of the coppery (soma) as they press the one belonging to pious ceremonies.
14. His two favorites, the bullish fallow bays, will convey Indra to the coppery (soma) among the industrious (priests).
   Let your team, the glory of the ceremony, convey you, facing our way, right here to our pressings.

15. We choose Pūṣan of many goods for yoking.
   You able one, invoked by many, you releaser—do your best because of our insight to thrust out wealth for us.
16. Sharpen us like a razor in your hands. Bestow riches, you releaser.
   In you is that ruddy good [=cattle] easy to find for us (and for) the mortal whom you urge on.

17. I pursue you, Pūṣan, to aim (toward you). I pursue you to praise (you), glowing one.
   I do not pursue (anything) of his—for that is alien, o good one, (and it is) for Pajra Sāman to praise.

18. Away (be) the cows toward some (other) pasture, o glowing, immortal one, (to be) our own legacy.
    Become our kindly helper, Pūṣan, most munificent for the winning of prizes.

19. Substantial is the bounty that brings a hundred horses at Kuruṅga's rituals of day(break).
    At the gifts of the vibrant king, bestowing good fortune, we thought ourselves to be among the Turvaśas.
20. Won through the insights of the prizewinning descendant of Kaṇva, (won) by the heaven-bound Priyamedhas,
    sixty thousand flawless [?] (cows) I drive along, (drive) forth herds of cows—I the seer.
21. Even the trees have found pleasure at my supper-time.
    They share in the cow in its profusion; they share in the horse in its profusion.

VIII.5 (625) Aśvins

Brahmātithi Kāṇva
39 verses: gāyatrī, except bṛhatī 37–38, anuṣṭubh 39, all arranged in tṛcas

This long hymn (at 39 verses the longest hymn to the Aśvins in the Ṛgveda) presents few difficulties and, correspondingly, few particular pleasures. Many pādas in the hymn have exact or near counterparts elsewhere.

The hymn begins not with the Aśvins but with the appearance of the (unnamed) Dawn (vs. 1), as a lead-in to the Aśvins' early morning journey. Throughout the hymn the two gods are urged to drive here to our sacrifice, with occasional mentions of the sacrifices they should pass over on their way to ours (esp. vss. 13, 15). They are also begged for the usual assortment of wealth in goods and livestock; their "refreshments" (*íṣ*) are especially insistently hoped for (see vss. 5, 9, 10, 20, 21, 31, 34, 36). There is almost no mythological material, little mention of the miraculous rescues that are the Aśvins' stock in trade. Brief allusions to two of these exploits are found in verses 22–23, and the bare names of a number of their clients are listed in verses 25–26.

The last three verses (37–39) are a dānastuti praising the gift of one Kaśu, lord of the Cedis. His previous, fairly modest, gift is mentioned in verse 38, with the hope that the Aśvins will have the opportunity to see a more magnificent version in verse 37. And in verse 39 Kaśu is implicitly challenged to make an unparalleled gift, so that other men will not win greater praise for their generosity.

1. When, though being at a distance, she of ruddy breath has brightened as if right here,
   she has stretched out her radiance in all directions.

2. Manfully, o wondrous ones, with your mind-yoked chariot of broad dimensions
   you accompany Dawn, o Aśvins.
3. O you rich in prizewinning mares, praise songs have appeared facing you two.
   Like a messenger I shall solemnly proclaim my speech.

4. *O Kaṇvas, for us shall I praise the two dear to many, delightful to many, who bring many good things,
   the Aśvins—for their help—
5. The most munificent, the best prizewinners, the two lords of beauty bringing refreshments
   who go to the house of the pious man.
6. To the pious man who has the gods well on his side (give) good wisdom that doesn't doublecross him;
   sprinkle his pasture-land with ghee.

7. Here to our praise song drive quickly at speed
   with your swift falcons, your horses,
8. With which you fly around the three far distances, all the luminous realms of heaven,
   and the three nights.
9. And refreshments along with cattle and winnings, too, o finders of the days—
   unfasten the paths for us to win (them).

10. Convey here to us, o Aśvins, wealth in cattle, in good heroes and good chariots,
    and refreshments along with horses.
11. Having grown strong, o lords of beauty, you wondrous ones whose tracks are golden,
    drink the somian honey.
12. O you rich in prizewinning mares, to us and to our bounteous (patrons) hold out extensive
    shelter that cannot be cheated.

13. Team up the formulations of the people and come quickly here.
    Do not go to the others.
14. You, o Aśvins—drink of this dear exhilarating drink,
    of the honey bestowed, o holy ones.
15. Bring here to us wealth in hundreds and thousands,
    consisting of much livestock, nourishing all.

16. Even though in many places men of inspired thought vie with (other) cantors in invoking you two—
    o men, o Aśvins, come here.

17. The people, provided with twisted ritual grass and oblations, making fit preparations,
call upon you two, o Aśvins.
18. Today let this praise song of ours, which best conveys you nearest,
be for you two, o Aśvins.

19. The skin-bag of honey that was set here in your chariot-rut,
drink from it, o Aśvins.
20. O you rich in prizewinning mares, with it bring weal for our livestock, our offspring, and our cow,
and refreshments rich in fat.
21. And heavenly refreshments and rivers, o finders of the days—
like two doors, you will open (these) up for us.

22. When did the son of Tugra, abandoned in the sea, do reverence to you, o men,
so that your chariot would fly with its birds?
23. O Nāsatyas, to Kaṇva, (his eyes) pasted shut and in a locked house,
over and over you offer your help.
24. Drive here with this help, when with our newer good lauds
I call upon you, o you with bullish goods.

25. Just as you helped Kaṇva, Priyamedha, Upastuta,
Atri, and Śr̥ñjāra, o Aśvins,
26. And just as you (helped) Aṃśu when the stake was to be decided and Agastya when (it was) cows,
and Sobhari when (it was) victory-prizes,
27. For so much favor, or more than that,
do we singers beg you, o Aśvins with bullish goods.

28. O Aśvins, the chariot with golden chariot-box and golden reins
that touches heaven—since you will mount it—
29. Golden your chariot-shaft, golden your chariot-pole and your axle;
golden both your wheels—
30. With it [=chariot] come here to us even from afar, o you rich in prize mares,
to this good praise of mine.

31. From far away you convey here the many refreshments
of the Dāsa, while consuming them, o immortal Aśvins.
32. Drive here to us with brilliance, here with fame, here with wealth, Aśvins,
you much-gleaming Nāsatyas.
33. Let your feathered birds [=horses], frothing at the mouth, convey you here
to the man who performs the ceremony well.

34. Your chariot pursuing our song—the (chariot) that rolls along, along with its refreshment—
its wheel does not ram against it.
35. (Drive here) with your golden chariot, with your horses with speedy forefeet,
o Nāsatyas, who spur on insights.
36. You sweeten, as it were, the wakeful wild animal [=soma?], o you of bullish goods.
Infuse wealth with refreshment for us.

37. O Aśvins, may you know of my new winnings—
how Kaśu, the lord of the Cedi, will give a hundred camels, ten thousand cows.
38. He who (previously) bestowed on me a king's ten (horses?) of golden appearance—
beneath the feet of the lord of the Cedis are (all) the communities, the "hide-tanning" men all around.
39. Let no one go by this path by which these Cedis go,
lest another man be lauded as a patron who's a better giver of abundance.

The following hymn initiates the second group of hymns in VIII, those in which the seer Vatsa is mentioned (VIII.6–11); see Oldenberg (1888: 211–14).

VIII.6 (626) Indra (1–45), Tirindira Pārśavya's Dānastuti (46–48)

Vatsa Kāṇva
48 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The Vatsa group contains only one hymn to Indra, but at forty-eight verses it is one of the longest hymns in the entire R̥gveda. It is thus not surprising that the hymn is not a tightly structured creation, but a fairly loose collection of three-verse units treating various aspects of Indra. Nonetheless, certain themes are threaded through the hymn, in particular the Kaṇvas' role in strengthening Indra through their poetry. This is strongly articulated in the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3), in which the poet Vatsa himself claims this role in verse 1, alongside his ancestral family in verses 2–3. This last verse contains the striking assertion that the Kaṇvas' praise is their "familial weapon," which they "speak"—an image developed in verses 7–8, where the Kaṇvas' insights are blazing missiles. In the next tr̥ca (vss. 10–12) the poetic "I" (presumably Vatsa) speaks of his poetic heritage. The tr̥ca consisting of verses 19–21 implicitly identifies the verbal products of the Kaṇvas with the physical oblations of the sacrifice. (And pāda 20c contains a particularly opaque simile, whose

meaning we are uncertain of.) Once again, in two adjacent tr̥cas (31–33, 34–36) the Kaṇvas' power to strengthen Indra by poetry is celebrated in straightforward terms. The last tr̥ca before the dānastuti (43–45) begins with another mention of the Kaṇvas' activity.

Interspersed among the Kaṇvas' self-glorifications are tr̥cas of straight praise for Indra. Tr̥cas 2 (vss. 4–6) and 5–6 (vss. 13–18) celebrate Indra's might and his victories, especially over Vr̥tra, and could be taken as examples of the Indra-strengthening praise-poetry that the Kaṇvas attribute to themselves. The later Indra-oriented tr̥cas (22–24, 25–27, 37–39, 40–42) are more concerned with the sacrifice, the invitation and journey to the soma, and the goods and help the sacrificers hope to obtain from Indra. In the midst of these is an enigmatic tr̥ca (vss. 28–30), which seems to suggest a connection between the primordial birth of the god (Indra? Soma?) and the origins of poetic inspiration.

The hymn ends with a three-verse dānastuti, which, for a change, is far easier to interpret than the hymn to which it is appended.

1. Great Indra, who is like rain-bearing Parjanya in might,
 has grown strong through the praises of Vatsa.
2. They (are) guiding the offspring of truth [=poem] safely across, when
 they bring it forward—the conveyors,
 the inspired poets, by the conveyance of truth.
3. The Kaṇvas—when by their praises they have made Indra the one who
 assures success to their sacrifice,
 they are speaking their own familial weapon.

4. To his battle fury the clans and all the communities bend down
 together,
 like the rivers to the sea.
5. That might of his flared when Indra rolled up
 both worlds together like a hide.
6. With his mace of a hundred joints, with the ram, he split apart
 the head of raging Vr̥tra.

7. These insights (bellow out)—we bellow out—again and again toward
 (you) at the forefront of the inspired words,
 (the insights that are) missiles, like the blazing of fire—
8. Since, though they are hidden, the insights blaze forth by themselves—
 the Kaṇvas (blaze forth)—in a stream of truth.
9. Might we attain to this, Indra: to wealth in cows and horses,
 and to a sacred formulation to be first in your thought.

10. Because it is just I who have acquired the wisdom of truth from my
 father,
 I have been (re)born like the sun.

11. I, like Kaṇva, beautify my songs with an age-old thought—
 just the one with which Indra acquired his unbridled force.
12. (There are those) who have not praised you, Indra, and seers who have praised you,
 but grow strong just (by) *my* (praise), as one well praised.

13. When his battle fury smoked, he, breaking Vr̥tra apart joint by joint,
 sent the waters to the sea.
14. You, Indra, struck your steadfast mace down upon Śuṣṇa the Dasyu,
 for you, mighty one, are famed as a bull.
15. Neither the heavens, nor the midspaces will encompass mace-bearing Indra with his might,
 nor will the earths.

16. The one who lay upon the great waters, standing fast against you, Indra,
 that one you jabbed down into their footsteps.
17. Who held together in his grasp these two great conjoined worlds,
 that one, o Indra, you hid with shades of darkness.
18. (There are) those Yatis and those Bhr̥gus who have praised you, Indra—
 but hear just my call, mighty one.

19. These dappled ones milk out ghee and the milk mixture for you, Indra,
 they being swollen full of truth in this way.
20. The fecund ones who have made you their infant-by-mouth [=nursling]
 sur(round you), as the supports (of heaven do) the sun [?].
21. It is just you, lord of power, that the Kaṇvas have strengthened with their recitation,
 you that the pressed drops (have strengthened).

22. Just under your leadership, o Indra, master of the stones, is the encomium
 and the sacrifice worth tussling over.
23. Break out great refreshment for us, like a fortress filled with cattle, Indra,
 and also offspring and abundance of heroes,
24. And this abundance of swift horses, Indra, which will shine forth here
 at the forefront among the Nāhuṣa clans.

25. You extend your control over the one whose eye is near to the sun [=Agni? gold?], as if over a cattle-pen.
 When, Indra, you will be gracious to us,
26. When, indeed, you display your power and rule over the settled peoples, o Indra,
 great and unbounded in your might,

27. Upon you the clans, offering oblations, call for help,
    (you who are) of broad expanse through the drops.

28. In a remote place of the mountains and at the conjunction of the rivers
    the inspired poet was born with insight.
29. From here, from the heights, watchful, he looks down upon the sea,
    from where, quivering, he stirs.
30. Just after that they see the dawning light of the age-old semen,
    when it is kindled far beyond heaven.

31. The Kaṇvas all strengthen their thought for you, Indra, and your manliness
    and your bullishness, most powerful one.
32. Enjoy this good praise of mine, Indra. Promote me,
    and strengthen my thought.
33. And in seeking a sacred formulation for you, you fully grown mace-bearer,
    as inspired poets we have fashioned (it) in order to live.

34. The Kaṇvas have roared, like waters going along a slope;
    their winning thought (has roared) to Indra.
35. Their recitations have increased Indra, like the rivers the sea,
    (Indra,) the unaging one to whom the battle fury has been conceded.
36. Drive here to us from afar, with your two beloved fallow bays.
    Drink this pressed soma, Indra.

37. Just you, best smasher of obstacles, do the peoples, when they have twisted their ritual grass,
    call on for the winning of prizes.
38. After you (roll) both worlds, as the wheel rolls (after) Etaśa;
    after (you roll) the drops being pressed [/sounding].
39. Reach exhilaration in the presence of Svarṇara and, o Indra, in the reed-filled (place).
    Become exhilarated by the thought of Vivasvant.

40. Having grown all the way to heaven, the mace-bearing bull roared again and again,
    the smasher of obstacles, the best drinker of soma.
41. Because you are the first-born seer, being the only master by your might, o
    Indra, you keep poking out goods.
42. Up to our pressings and toward your delight, let the hundred
    straight-backed fallow bays carry you.

43. This earlier insight, swollen full of honey and ghee,
    have the Kaṇvas increased through their recitation.

44. Of the great ones it is just Indra whom the mortal should choose at the ritual offering,
 Indra whom the one striving to win (should choose) for his help.
45. The fallow bays, praised by Priyamedha, will convey you near,
 o much praised one, for soma-drinking.

46. At Tirindira's I received a hundred and at Parśu's a thousand
 as the bounties of the Yāduvas.
47. Three hundred chargers, ten thousand cows
 did they give to Pajra Sāman.
48. The prominent one has reached up to heaven, giving camels yoked in fours,
 and by his fame (has reached) the Yāduva people.

VIII.7 (627) Maruts

Punarvatsa Kāṇva
36 verses: gāyatrī

Although a tr̥ca division is possible for this hymn, it does not impose itself. This is one of only three Marut hymns in VIII (with VIII.20 and VIII.94). As with most Marut hymns, this one contains considerable description of the effects on the cosmos of these embodiments of storm and of their journey through the midspace: the bowing of the mountains, the violent winds and rain, the roaring. These descriptions are found primarily in the first part of the hymn (e.g., vss. 2–5, 7–8) and toward the end (see esp. vs. 34, with its bowing mountains forming a ring with vss. 2 and 5). The middle portion of the hymn (approximately vss. 11–21) expresses our desires for their presence at our sacrifice and for their gifts, with the last two verses (20–21) posing anxious questions concerning the whereabouts of the Maruts and the loss of their attention. This anxiety returns in two further question verses, 30–31, which preface the Maruts' final journey to the place of sacrifice, where they are praised together with Agni (vss. 32–26).

Verses 22–26 present various fragments of mythology; particularly striking, and baffling, is verse 26 with its mention of the poet Uśanā and the "loins of the ox," which may be a glancing reference to the Vala cave.

Like other long hymns in VIII the structure of this one is quite loose. However, it does have at least a sketchy ring: in addition to verses 2/5 and 34 mentioned above, note the references to meter in the first and last verses (1 and 36). It is characterized also by recycling of vocabulary, by rhetorical repetition (see, e.g., vss. 6, 9, 17, 22–24), and by frequent phonetic figures (a particularly nice one is found in 28ab: . . . *pŕ̥ṣatī ráthe / práṣṭir . . . róhitaḥ*).

1. In that the inspired poet has let flow the triṣṭubh refreshment to you, o Maruts,
   you rule [/shine] throughout the mountains.
2. In that you have certainly set your attention on your course, you resplendent ones displaying your power,
   the mountains have bent down.
3. They raise themselves upward with the winds—the bellowing ones whose mother is Pṛśni.
   They have milked out swelling refreshment.
4. The Maruts scatter mist; they make the mountains tremble,
   when they drive their course with the winds,
5. When the mountain peak (holds itself) down for your coursing, and the rivers hold themselves down for your expansion and for your great gusting.
6. You at night we invoke for help, you by day,
   you when the ceremony is proceeding.
7. Up they rise, bright with ruddy breath, along their courses,
   bellowing on the back of heaven.
8. They release the rein [/ray] with strength, for the sun to travel its path;
   they have extended themselves with its radiant beams.
9. This hymn of mine, o Maruts, this praise, o masters of the Ṛbhus,
   this invocation of mine—long for it.
10. Three lakes did the dappled ones milk out as honey for the mace-bearer,
    a wellspring, a cask full of water.
11. Maruts, when seeking your benevolence we call you from heaven,
    then come here to us.
12. For—o Rudras, masters of the Ṛbhus, possessing good drops—in our house
    and also in exhilaration you are provident.
13. Wealth, arousing exhilaration, consisting of much livestock, all-nourishing—
    impel it here to us from heaven, o Maruts.
14. When, as if on (the byways) of the peaks, you have set your attention on your course, resplendent ones,
    you become exhilarated with the drops being pressed [/sounding].
15. A mortal might beg benevolence of them,
    even of such an undeceivable (flock), with his prayers.
16. They who, like droplets, blow their blast through the two world-halves along with their rains,
    milking the unfailing wellspring,
17. Up they rise with their sounds [/with (the drops) being pressed], up with their chariots, and up with the winds;
    up with praises—they whose mother is Pṛśni.

18. With which (aid) you aided Turvaśa and Yadu, with which (you aided) Kaṇva, who gained the stakes,
may we receive (a portion) of this for wealth.
19. O you of good drops, these refreshments here swelling like ghee
will strengthen you, along with the prayers of the descendant of Kaṇva.
20. Where now do you become exhilarated, you of good drops, you for whom the ritual grass has been twisted?
Who is the formulator who serves you?
21. For it is not (now) as it was before, when in return for our praises of you
you used to animate the troops of truth, o you for whom the ritual grass has been twisted.
22. They put together the great waters, together the two "opponents" [=heaven and earth], together the sun,
together the mace, joint by joint.
23. They drove Vr̥tra apart, joint by joint, apart the mountains lacking rules [/radiance],
performing a bullish manly deed.
24. They stood by the unbridled force and the resolve of Trita, while he was fighting,
(stood) by Indra at the overcoming of Vr̥tra.
25. With lightning in their hands, heaven-bound—golden (helmet-)lips (stretched out) on their head—
the resplendent ones anointed themselves for beauty.
26. When you drove with Uśanā from afar to the "loins of the ox" [=Vala cave?],
like heaven it [=cave] roared with fear.
27. (Come) here to us, for the giving of bounty, with horses whose forefeet are golden—
come near, o gods.
28. When the chestnut side-horse guides the dappled (mares yoked) to their chariot,
the resplendent ones drive; they let flow the waters.
29. In (a place) of good soma, reed-filled, foamy, providing (soma's) dwelling,
the men drove in (their chariot) with down-turned wheels.
30. When will you come, o Maruts, to the inspired poet invoking (you) in just this way,
(come) with merciful (aid) to the one needing assistance?
31. What is this now, you fair-weather friends?!—since you have deserted Indra,
who vaunts himself on partnership with you?
32. O Kaṇvas, for us I will praise Agni along with the Maruts, who have maces in their hands,
who have golden axes.

33. I (would turn) hither the bulls, worshiped first at the sacrifice, hither for newer good progress,
would turn them who bring glittering prizes.
34. Even the peaks bend down, thinking themselves depths;
even the mountains hold themselves down.
35. Traveling crosswise the birds guide (the Maruts) here, as they [=Maruts] fly through the midspace.
(The Maruts) establish vital energy for their praiser.
36. Since age-old Agni has (just) been born, like a metrical verse, with the ray of the sun,
they [=Maruts] have extended themselves with its radiant beams.

VIII.8 (628) Aśvins

Sadhvaṃsa Kāṇva
23 verses: anuṣṭubh

Despite the Anukramaṇī ascription, the poet of this hymn repeatedly identifies himself as Vatsa (vss. 7, 8, 11, 15, 19), the Kaṇva. His composition is monotonously one-note: "Come/drive here to us" is found, with few variations, in the first seven verses and in a number of later ones (10, 11, 14, 17, 19); the Aśvins are urged to leave wherever in the cosmos they find themselves (e.g., vss. 3–4, 7, 14), in order to come to our sacrifice, and the usual anxieties about competing sacrificers who might tempt the gods to pass us by are on view (vs. 8). The poet's uncertainty about the location of the Aśvins and his desire to lure the gods to his sacrifice and away from his competitors are summed up in the final verse (23), with its paradoxical presentation of the "three footsteps" of the Aśvins, which are both visible and hidden. The evocation of Viṣṇu's three strides is probably deliberate, but the reasons for it unclear.

There is little other content in the hymn beyond the urged journey, the offered sacrifice, and the expressed hopes for bounties in exchange. Verse 10 briefly and obliquely alludes to the maiden Sūryā's mounting of the Aśvins' chariot, from the well-known myth about Sūryā's marriage, and the names of some successful clients of the Aśvins are listed in verses 20–21.

1. Come here to us, o Aśvins, with all forms of help;
you wondrous ones whose track is golden—drink the somian honey.
2. Now drive here with your sun-skinned chariot, o Aśvins,
you benefactors decorated in gold, you poets of deep perception.
3. Drive here from Nahus, here from the midspace by reason of our well-twisted hymns.
You will drink the honey pressed at the pressing of the Kaṇvas, o Aśvins.
4. Drive here to us from heaven, here from the midspace, o you (invoked with) "then, friends."

The son of Kaṇva has pressed the somian honey for you here.

5. Drive here to us for soma-drinking upon hearing
 "*Svāhā*!" and the praise song—o strengthening Aśvins; (drive) forth by reason of our insightful thoughts, you poets and superior men.
6. Even as seers previously called upon you for help, o men,
 drive here, o Aśvins; come right up to this good praise of mine here.
7. Come here to us even from the luminous realm of heaven, o finders of the sun,
 you who are attentive to Vatsa by reason of his insights and listen to our summons by reason of our praise songs.
8. Do those other than us sit around (you) with their praise songs, Aśvins?
 The son of Kaṇva, the seer Vatsa, has strengthened you with his hymns!
9. The inspired poet has called you here for help, o Aśvins,
 stainless ones, best smashers of obstacles: become joy itself for us.
10. When the maiden [=Sūryā] mounted your chariot,
 you set forth to all conceivable things, you Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning mares.
11. From there drive here with your chariot with its thousandfold raiment, o Aśvins.
 Vatsa has recited for you his honeyed speech—he a poet, son of a poet.
12. The two delightful to many who bring many good things, the two minders of riches,
 the Aśvins, as draft-animals, have bellowed out to this praise song of mine.
13. Provide to us here all bounties that won't shame us, o Aśvins;
 make us follow proper sequence: don't make us subject to scorn!
14. When, Nāsatyas, you are in the far distance or when upon the circumference [?],
 from there drive here with your chariot with its thousandfold raiment, o Aśvins.
15. O Nāsatyas, the seer Vatsa, who has strengthened you with his hymns,
 for him provide refreshment with thousandfold raiment, dripping with ghee.
16. O Aśvins, offer nourishment dripping with ghee to him
 who will praise you for your favor and will seek goods from you, o lords of the drop.
17. Come here to this praise song of ours, o you who care for the stranger and provide many benefits.
 Make us very splendid, you superior men. Grant these things for us to prevail.
18. The Priyamedhas have called you here with all your forms of help—
 you who rule over the rites, o Aśvins—(who listen) to their calls on your journey.

19. Come here to us as joy and luck itself, o Aśvins,
 (to him), Vatsa, who has strengthened you with his insightful thoughts and hymns, o you who seek admiration.
20. With (those forms of help) with which you helped Kaṇva and Medhātithi, with which Vaśa Daśavraja,
 with which Gośarya, with those help us, o men;
21. With which you helped Trasadasyu when the stake was to be decided, o men,
 with those help us, to win the prize, o Aśvins.
22. Let the well-twisted praise songs and hymns strengthen you, o Aśvins,
 found in many places, best smashers of obstacles: become the ones who provide many desired things to us.
23. There are three footsteps of the Aśvins—though being visible they are hidden far away.
 (Let) the two poets (drive) nearby along the flights of truth, away from (other) living beings.

VIII.9 (629) Aśvins

Śaśakarṇa Kāṇva
21 verses: br̥hatī 1, 4, 6, 14, 15; gāyatrī 2, 3, 20, 21; kakubh 5; anuṣṭubh 7–9, 13, 16–19; triṣṭubh 10; virāj 11; jagatī 12, all arranged in tr̥cas

As is clear from the display above, a dizzying variety of meters is found in this hymn. However, as Oldenberg points out (1888: 151), save for the tr̥ca composed of verses 10–12, all these differently named meters are composed of combinations of eight- and twelve-syllable pādas, which combine easily and without confusion, and several tr̥cas consist of a single meter (anuṣṭubh vss. 7–9, 16–18).

As in the previous hymn, the poet identifies himself several times as Vatsa (vss. 1, 6, 15); the Anukramaṇī's ascription to Śaśakarṇa ("Hare-eared") may be taken as a nickname or simply a fanciful invention, as it has no verbal support in the hymn.

The contents of the hymn are both as various as its meters and, underlyingly, as harmonious. Certain expressions recur throughout the hymn (half-verse initial *ā́ nūnám* "here and now," alternating with simple *ā́* "here"; repeated *yád* and *yád vā* "when"/"or when"; repeated *prá*). The poet focuses on asking the Aśvins for aid and protection, and offers sacrificial service in return. A tr̥ca late in the hymn (vss. 16–18) is addressed to Dawn in her relation to the Aśvins, a connection that fixes the ritual time of at least that part of the hymn as the Morning Pressing.

1. Here and now, o Aśvins, come to the aid of Vatsa.
 Hold out to him broad shelter that keeps the wolf at bay; keep away whatever hostilities there are.

2. What (manly power) is in the midspace, what in heaven, what through the five peoples of Manu,
   confer that manly power (on us), o Aśvins.
3. (There are) inspired poets who have fondled your wondrous powers all over, o Aśvins—
   even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.

4. Here is the hot milk poured around for you, o Aśvins, together with a praise song,
   here the honeyed soma with which you will attend to Vr̥tra [/the obstacle], o you who bring prize mares as goods.
5. What (healing remedy) you made in the waters, what in the tree, what in plants, o you of many wondrous powers,
   with that help me, o Aśvins.
6. (Even) when you are bustling about, Nāsatyas, or when you are engaged in healing, o gods,
   this Vatsa does not get enough of his poetic thoughts for you—for you go to the man with an offering.

7. Here and now the seer attends to the praise song for the Aśvins in exchange for a thing of value.
   Here he will pour the most honeyed soma and the hot milk in the presence of the fire-priest.
8. Here and now you two will mount the swift-tracked chariot, o Aśvins.
   Here should these praise songs of mine move you, like a cloud.
9. If today we would move you with our hymns, o Nāsatyas,
   or with our voices, o Aśvins, even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.

10. As when Kakṣīvant (called) you, as when Vyaśva, as when the seer Dīrghatamas called you,
    as when Pr̥thi Vainya (called) you to the ritual seats, even so, take cognizance just of this.
11. Drive to us as protectors of our shelter and protectors from afar; become protectors of our moving (possessions [=livestock]) and protectors of our bodies.
    Drive your circuit for our progeny and posterity (to prosper),
12. When you drive with Indra on the same chariot or when you come to share the same home with Vāyu, o Aśvins,
    when you are joined in fellowship with the Ādityas and R̥bhus or when you stand in the strides of Viṣṇu.

13. If today I should call on you in order to to win the prize, o Aśvins—
    the might that is for victory in battles: that is the best help of the Aśvins.

14. Here and now, o Aśvins, drive here. Here are oblations set out for you;
    here are soma-drinks for you at Turvaśa's and Yadu's (sacrifice) and
    here also among the Kaṇvas.
15. The healing remedy that is in the distance and (the one) nearby, o
    Nāsatyas,
    with that now extend shelter to Vimada and to Vatsa, o attentive ones.

16. I have woken up with the goddess [=Dawn], simultaneously with my
    speech for the Aśvins:
    o goddess, you have uncovered my (poetic) thought here, uncovered the
    gift for mortals.
17. Wake up the Aśvins, o Dawn—(wake them) up, o goddess, liberal
    and great,
    (wake them) up in due order, o Hotar of the sacrifice [=Agni]. (Wake)
    up lofty fame for our exhilaration.
18. When, o Dawn, you drive with your radiant beam, you shine together
    with the sun.
    This chariot of the Aśvins drives here along the circuit protective
    of men.

19. When the swollen shoots, like cows, yield their milk with their udders,
    or when their voices have bellowed, those seeking the gods (wake) up
    the Aśvins.
20. Up for brilliance, up for swelling might, up for victory over men and for
    shelter,
    up for ritual skill, you attentive ones—
21. Now when by reason of our insights you sit down at the womb of the
    father, o Aśvins,
    or when by reason of your favors, you praiseworthy ones.

VIII.10 (630) Aśvins

Pragātha Kāṇva
6 verses: bṛhatī 1, 5, madhyejyotis 2, anuṣṭubh 3, āstārapaṅkti 4, satobṛhatī 6, arranged in pragāthas

Like the previous hymn, this one contains a number of different meters, though all fall into the twelve- and eight-syllable pādas that combine easily into mixed lyric hymns. Unlike the tṛca structure of the last hymn, this one is arranged in pragāthas, the first two of which (vss. 1–4) are irregular, while the last (5–6) has the familiar bṛhatī/satobṛhatī alternation.

The hymn is a distillation of one of the key themes in the much longer Aśvin hymns that precede it (VIII.8–9). The last pādas of the first and last verses are identical: "from there drive here, o Aśvins," and most of the rest of the hymn (vss. 1–2,

5–6) consists of speculation on where "there" might be, with an array of cosmic locations suggested. The middle two verses (3–4) invoke the Aśvins and remind them of their devotion to us and to our sacrifice.

1. If you are at (the place) providing a long seat [=earth/ritual ground], or if you are yonder in the luminous realm of heaven,
   or if on the sea or in a house made ready, from there drive here, o Aśvins.
2. Or if you two have mixed the sacrifice for Manu, even so, take note only of the son of Kaṇva.
   I call upon Br̥haspati and all the gods, upon Indra and Viṣṇu and the Aśvins with swift missiles.

3. Now I call upon these Aśvins of very wondrous powers, the two made for grasping,
   whose comradeship for us is preeminent and their friendship among the gods,
4. For whom (our) sacrifices and patrons are preeminent (even?) at the sunless time.
   They are attentive to our sacrifice and ceremony—those who drink the somian honey after their wont.

5. If today you are in the west, if in the east, o Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning mares,
   if with Druhyu, Anu, Turvaśa or Yadu, I call upon you—so come to me.
6. If you are flying in the midspace or if along these two world-halves, o you who provide many benefits,
   or if, after your wont, you are standing upon your chariot, from there drive here, o Aśvins.

VIII.11 (631) Agni

Vatsa Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī, except pratiṣṭhā 1, vardhamāna 2, triṣṭubh 10, arranged in tr̥cas, with a final verse

This is the last hymn in the Vatsa group and the only one dedicated to Agni. Compared to earlier hymns in the cycle it is both brief and, as Renou points out (*EVP* 13: 147), elementary. Nonetheless it is a pleasing composition, with adroit deployment of contrastive terms, such as "mortal/god," and of parallel structures, such as "to be X-ed at Y" (vss. 1, 2, 10—the last also providing a simple ring).

1. You, Agni, are the protector of commandments, a god here among mortals here;
   you are to be reverently invoked at the sacrifices.

2. You are to be proclaimed at the rites,
   o overpowering Agni, as the charioteer of the ceremonies.
3. Keep away hatreds from us, o Jātavedas,
   and ungodly hostilities, o Agni.

4. The sacrifice of the cheating mortal, even though it be nearby—
   you do not seek it out.
5. Of you the immortal we mortals revere the many names—
   (we) inspired poets (revere the names) of Jātavedas.
6. We inspired poets call upon the inspired one for help, we mortals upon the god for aid,
   upon Agni with our hymns.

7. Vatsa will guide your mind here, even from your most distant seat,
   o Agni, with a hymn whose desire is you.
8. Because you are of the same aspect in many places, preeminent throughout all the clans,
   in combats we call upon you.
9. In combats we call upon Agni for help as we seek the prize,
   upon him who provides brilliant bounties when prizes (are at stake).

10. For as the ancient one to be invoked at the ceremonies, the Hotar both from of old and also anew, take your seat.
    Give pleasure to your own body, o Agni, and win good fortune for us through sacrifice.

Hymns 12–18 form the third group of hymns in Maṇḍala VIII, which, as Oldenberg notes in his *Prolegomena* (1888: 214), clearly belong together, despite the internal absence of poets' names and the varying attributions of the Anukramaṇī. All but the last of these hymns (VIII.18 [Ādityas]) are dedicated to Indra and arranged properly by descending numbers of verses.

VIII.12 (632) Indra

Parvata Kāṇva
33 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tr̥cas.

R̥gveda VIII.12 is tightly structured: the meter is uṣṇih (8 8 12), and in each tr̥ca the last four syllables of the final pāda form a refrain, which is, however, syntactically integrated into the verse. The last two tr̥cas before the final one (vss. 25–27, 28–30) expand the four-syllable refrain to full pāda length (that is, the final twelve syllables), which retards the verbal progress and hints at the end to come. The long refrain of verses 25–27, "just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong,"

echoes the short refrain of the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6), "you have waxed strong," and thus hints at a ring composition as well.

The verb form shared by those two refrains ("waxed strong," root *vakṣ*) is found elsewhere in the hymn, as are synonyms (root *vr̥dh*: "grow strong, make strong, increase") and near synonyms ("spread," "swell"), and this verbal material provides the thematic spine of the hymn. Otherwise there is a mixture of mythological material, especially toward the end, and invitations to and descriptions of the sacrifice. In the final tr̥ca (vss. 31–33) the poet announces the launch of his own hymn, that is, the hymn to which this tr̥ca forms the end, and asks for the usual bounties from Indra.

1. Most powerful Indra, your exhilaration that is conspicuous as the best drinker of soma,
   with which you strike down the devourer—for that we beg.
2. That with which (you helped) Daśagva and Adhrigu possessing solar glory, who sets atremble,
   with which you helped the sea—for that we beg.
3. (That) by which you impel the great waters forth to the Sindhu like chariots
   to travel the path of truth—for that we beg.

4. This praise song for dominance, purified like ghee, o master of the stones,
   by which now in a single day with might you have waxed strong—
5. This one enjoy, o you who yearn for songs—it swells like the sea.
   O Indra, with all your forms of help you have waxed strong.
6. The god from afar who has become ready for partnership with us—
   spreading like the one who spreads the rain from heaven [=Parjanya], you have waxed strong.

7. His beacons waxed strong and the mace in his two hands,
   when, like the sun, he made the two worlds grow.
8. When, o full-grown master of settlements, you devoured a thousand buffaloes,
   just after that your great Indrian power grew forth.
9. With the rays of the sun Indra burns down Arśasāna;
   victorious like fire over the woods, he grew forth.

10. This newer visionary thought goes to you, conforming to her season [/to the ritual sequence].
    Rendering service, dear to many—she is (well-)measured indeed.
11. As embryo of the sacrifice, seeking the gods, (the thought?) purifies its intention following the proper order.
    By praises of Indra it has grown—it is (well-)measured indeed.

12. Indra, who is the gain from our alliance, spreads himself out for soma-drinking.
    (The thought) advancing like an axe for the presser—it is (well-) measured indeed.

13. Whom [=Indra] the inspired Āyus, whose conveyance is solemn speech, have brought to exhilaration—
    like ghee, it swells in his mouth—(the speech) that belongs to truth.
14. And Aditi gave birth to the praise song for Indra, the sovereign king,
    (the song) proclaimed by many for his help—(the song) that belongs to truth.
15. The draft-horses have roared to (him) for help and for his glorification.
    Your two fallow bays, o god, do not follow a commandment separate (from the one) that belongs to truth.

16. When (you drink) soma in company with Viṣṇu or when with Trita Āptya,
    or when in company with the Maruts you reach exhilaration with the drops—
17. Or when, able one, you reach exhilaration at a distance, upon the sea,
    take pleasure just in *our* pressing with its drops—
18. Or when you are the strengthener of the presser, of the sacrificer, o lord of settlements,
    or in whose solemn speech you take pleasure—together with the drops.

19. Upon hymning the god time after time, for (him) to help you, upon hymning Indra time after time,
    then they came through to victory for the sacrifice.
20. With sacrifices (they strengthened) him whose vehicle is the sacrifice, with soma-drinks the best soma-drinker;
    with libations they strengthened Indra—they came through.
21. Great is his guidance and many are the encomia for him.
    All good things are for the pious man—they came through.

22. Indra did the gods set in front to smash Vr̥tra.
    To Indra did their voices roar—entirely for his might.
23. To him, great through his greatness, to him hearing the summons through our praise songs
    and chants do we keep roaring—entirely for his might.
24. The mace-bearer whom the two worlds do not encompass, nor the midspaces,
    just from his own onslaught he has flared up—entirely from his might.

25. When, o Indra, at the battle-charge the gods set you in front,
    just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.

26. When, o mace-bearer, with your vast power you smashed Vr̥tra who was blocking the rivers,
just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.
27. When Viṣṇu strode his three steps by your might,
just after that your two beloved fallow bays waxed strong.

28. When your two beloved fallow bays grew strong from day to day,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.
29. When the Marutian clans held themselves down for you,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.
30. When you fixed yonder sun, the blazing light, fast in heaven,
just after that all these worlds held themselves in submission to you.

31. The inspired poet, through his insights, raises this good praise to you, Indra,
which guides its kin safely across, like footsteps, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).
32. When they have sounded in unison in his own dear domain,
in the navel of the sacrifice, along with the milking, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding),
33. Indra, give to us the possession of good heroes, of good horses, of good cows,
like a Hotar, (for us) to be first in your thought, while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).

VIII.13 (633) Indra

Nārada Kāṇva
33 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tr̥cas

Though, like the previous hymn (VIII.12), this one is in uṣṇih meter and arranged in tr̥cas, the tight structuring of VIII.12 is absent here, save in the final tr̥ca (vss. 31–33) with its four-syllable refrain and repeated identifications with the "bull," and most of the tr̥cas lack clear unity. The theme of growing and making strong found in VIII.12 is continued here, however—notably in the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) and that formed by verses 16–18, but also generally throughout the hymn. There are also less insistent links between different parts of the hymn (e.g., the tree branches of vss. 6, 17), and some pleasing turns of phrase, like the "sea of the stalk" (vs. 15) referring to a particular large vessel of soma.

Mythological material is mostly lacking in the hymn, and what is found is given perfunctory treatment (see the allusions to the Maruts in vss. 20 and 28–29). The focus instead is the usual give-and-take of the ritual compact. Although the hymn has no spectacularly memorable features, it does not seem to deserve Geldner's scornful dismissal as "ein recht nichtssagendes ['trivial' or 'vacuous'] Lied."

1. When the soma juices have been pressed, Indra purifies his resolve, which is worthy of hymns.
He knows his own strengthening skill, for he is great.
2. In the first highest heaven, in the seat of the gods, he is the strengthening one,
affording good passage, foremost in fame, entirely victorious amid the waters.
3. I call on him, on Indra the tempestuous, for the winning of prizes, for plunder.
Become, for us in your favor, our closest comrade, for strengthening.

4. This gift here, o Indra who yearns for songs, streams for you from the one who presses.
Becoming exhilarated, you rule over this ritual grass.
5. Now, o Indra, give us that which we pressers beg of you.
Bring here to us the shimmering wealth that finds the sun.
6. When the boundless praiser makes bold his songs for you,
your *vitality grows afterward as branches do, when they take pleasure.

7. As of old, I will give birth to the songs: hear the call of the singer.
At every revel you have waxed strong for the one who performs (rituals) well.
8. Like waters going along a downward slope, they play—the liberal gifts of him
who is called the lord of heaven by this visionary thought.
9. And who is called lord of the separate peoples—he alone exerts his will—
by those strengthening (him) through reverence, seeking help. Rejoice in the pressed (soma).

10. Praise the famous one who is attentive to poetic inspiration, to whom belong the two overpowering fallow bays
that go to the house of the pious and reverential man.
11. You of great thought, ramming through with your horses frothing at the mouth,
with the swift ones, drive here to the sacrifice—for it is surely weal for you.
12. O Indra, most powerful lord of settlements, fix wealth fast in the singers,
and immortal fame and goods for our patrons.

13. I call upon you when the sun has risen; I call upon (you) at the day's midday.
Rejoicing, Indra, come here to us with your teams.

14. Come here! Run forth! Take the exhilaration of the pressed (soma) accompanied by cows.
    Stretch the ancient thread in the way that is known.
15. Whether, able one, you are in the far distance, whether nearby, Vṛtra-smiter,
    or whether at the sea of the stalk, it is just you who are our helper.

16. Let our songs increase Indra, let our pressed drops (increase) Indra;
    in Indra have the oblation-bearing clans found joy.
17. Just him did the inspired poets, seeking aid, (increase) with downward coursing help.
    The battle cries made Indra increase, as tree-branches do.
18. The gods stretched for themselves a noteworthy sacrifice among the Trikadrukas.
    Just him [=Indra] let our hymns increase—him who ever increases.

19. When the praiser, following his own commandment, has set out his recitations for you in proper sequence,
    he is called gleaming, pure, and unerring.
20. He perceives just that youthful (troop) of Rudra [=Maruts] in the ancient domains,
    where the discerning ones [=Maruts?] have distributed that thought.
21. If you will choose my companionship, drink of this stalk,
    by which we have crossed beyond all hatreds.

22. O Indra who longs for songs, when will your praiser become most wealful for you?
    When will you place us amid bovine and equine goods?
23. And your two well-praised bullish fallow bays pull your chariot
    to (the soma) most exhilarating to (you) who do not age—for whom we beg.
24. For him do we beg, him praised by many, the youthful one with his ancient forms of help.
    He will sit down upon the dear ritual grass once again.

25. Become increased, o you who are praised by many, with your forms of help that are praised by the seers.
    Milk out swelling refreshment, and help us.
26. O Indra, it is only you who are the helper of him who praises just so, o master of the stones.
    From out of the truth I raise to you my insight yoked by mind.
27. Yoking here your two feasting companions, for soma-drinking,
    cry out to the fallow bays that bring the "forth to that" wealth, Indra.

28. Let them cry out—those who are yours: the Rudras accompany your splendor,
as do the clans of Maruts, to your satisfaction.
29. These (clans), his advance (troops), find pleasure in the track that is in heaven.
In the navel of the sacrifice they have joined together, as is (well-) known.
30. This one—to take the long view while the rite is going forth toward the east—
measures the sacrifice in proper order, having surveyed it.

31. A bull is this chariot of yours, Indra, and your fallow bays are also bulls.
A bull are you, o you of a hundred resolves, and our call is a bull.
32. A bull is the pressing stone, a bull the exhilarating drink, and a bull this pressed soma here.
A bull is the sacrifice that you urge onward, and our call is a bull.
33. As a bull, I call upon you, the bull, o mace-bearer, together with your brilliant help,
for you cherish a responsive praise, and our call is a bull.

VIII.14 (634) Indra

Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
15 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn begins with a pleasing playfulness: the poet teases Indra by declaring that, if their places were switched, he (the poet as Indra) would be far more generous than Indra is now being (vss. 1–3), with the argument made in the next tr̥ca (vss. 4–6; see also 10–12) that the strength Indra acquires from the sacrifice gives him the power to be generous. Two tr̥cas in the hymn are devoted to Indra's great deeds: verses 7–9 to the splitting of the Vala cave and the supporting of the heavenly realms, verses 13–15 to several different exploits, most notably the decapitation of the demon Namuci (vs. 13). Though Namuci is mentioned several other times in the text, this is the only place in the R̥gveda that refers to the later story of Indra's trickery directed against Namuci: pledging not to slay him with anything dry or wet, he used seafoam as his weapon. (The earliest clear version of this tale is probably that in Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā IV.3.4, but it is recounted in several other Brāhmaṇa texts and into epic and Classical Sanskrit. See M. Bloomfield [1893: 143–63]. For a possible indirect reference in the R̥gveda, see I.104.3.)

The gāyatrī meter and tr̥ca structure, combined with the conversational tone of the opening verses, give this hymn a light texture and informal style that contrast nicely with the more ponderous Indra hymns in the early parts of Maṇḍala VIII.

1. Indra, if I, like you, were, all alone, lord over goods,
   my praiser would have cows as his companions.
2. I would do my best for him. I would want to give to him who possesses inspired thought, o lord of power—
   if I were master of cattle.
3. Your liberal spirit is a milk-cow for the sacrificer, for the presser:
   swelling, she gives the cow and horse as her milk.

4. There exists no one to obstruct your generosity, Indra, neither god nor mortal,
   when, praised, you want to give bounty.
5. The sacrifice made Indra strong, when he unrolled the earth,
   creating for himself a headdress in heaven.
6. You who have grown strong and won all the stakes—
   we choose your help, Indra.

7. In the exhilaration of soma he spread out the midspace and the luminous realms—
   Indra did, when he split Vala.
8. He drove up the cattle for the Aṅgirases, making visible those that were hidden.
   He shoved Vala nearby.
9. Through Indra the luminous realms of heaven are firm and made firm,
   stable and not to be shoved aside.

10. Like the waters' wave that brings exhilaration, the praise song hastens rapidly (to you), Indra.
    The exhilarating drinks have shone forth for you.
11. For you are the strengthener of praise songs, Indra, the strengthener of recitations,
    and the creator of good fortune for your praisers.
12. Just Indra will the hairy(-maned) fallow bays carry for the soma-drinking
    right up to the sacrifice—him who is very generous.

13. With the foam of the waters you made the head of Namuci roll, Indra,
    when you conquered all contenders.
14. They who, through their wiles, were trying to creep up and mount to heaven, Indra,
    those Dasyus did you send tumbling down.
15. Indra, you made the community that performs no (soma-)pressing vanish away in all directions—
    you as the soma-drinker getting the upper hand.

VIII.15 (635) Indra

Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
13 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas, with a final verse

Attributed to the same poets as the preceding VIII.14, this hymn is a more conventional praise hymn. It asserts the dominance of Indra over all the cosmos (esp. vss. 2–6), and conversely the contribution the cosmic entities and the various other gods make to Indra's power (vss. 7–10). The final tṛca (10–12), with its coda apparently addressed to Soma (vs. 13), seeks to harness all Indra's powers for victory for our side, and thus echoes the poet's opening charge to his comrades (vs. 1). The return to the beginning is also signaled by a ring-compositional device: the first two pādas of verse 11 are almost identical to those of verse 3 in the Sanskrit, though their translations diverge somewhat.

Both the language and the structure of this hymn are straightforward, but its relatively simplicity avoids the banal by the deft balancing of the powers in the two contrastive sections of the hymn and the unembellished grandeur of the rhetoric.

1. Sing forth to him, much invoked and much praised.
   Seek to entice mighty Indra here with hymns,
2. Him, the doubly lofty, whose lofty power holds fast the two world-halves,
   the mountains and plains, the waters and sun, through his bullishness.
3. You, o much praised one, are the ruler; you alone keep smashing obstacles,
   o Indra, to extend victories and (deeds) worthy of fame.

4. We hymn your exhilaration, an overpowering bull in battles,
   creating wide space, bringing the splendor of fallow bays, o master of the stone—
5. By which you found the lights for Āyu and Manu.
   Becoming exhilarated, you rule over this ritual grass.
6. Even today do the reciters praise this (deed) of yours, as in the earlier way:
   you shall win the waters, whose husband is a bull, day after day.

7. This lofty Indrian power of yours, your unbridled force and resolve,
   and the mace worthy to be chosen—these does the Holy Place sharpen.
8. Heaven increases your manliness, Indra, earth your fame;
   the waters and mountains spur you on.
9. Viṣṇu, the lofty dwelling place, hymns you, as do Mitra and Varuṇa.
   The Marut troop cheers you on.

10. You are the bull of the peoples; you were born as the most munificent, Indra.
    In every way you have acquired all things that bring good descendants.

11. In every way, o much-praised one, you alone stream over obstacles.
 None other than Indra spurs more action.
12. When, o Indra, they call upon you for help, every man for himself,
 according to his own thought,
 with *our* superior men win the sun now.

13. Fit (to be) a great dwelling for us, entering into all forms, (o Soma,)
 excite Indra, the lord of power, to victory.

VIII.16 (636) Indra

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This is, in some ways, a meta–praise hymn, that is, a hymn *about* praising Indra. Although the hymn is certainly full of actual praise of the deity, it also repeatedly refers to invoking, praising, singing to, and giving recognition to Indra and his powers and deeds—in other words, to the delivery of the praise itself. Perhaps related to this feature is the noteworthy fact that Indra is in the 3rd person throughout the hymn, until the direct address and requests of the final verse (12). The constant 3rd-person reference is emphasized by regular fronting and incantatory repetition of 3rd-person pronouns referring to Indra (see, e.g., vss. 5–6, 8–9) and of his name (see, e.g., vss. 7, 9, 11).

As for the content of the praise, it focuses on Indra's power in warfare, where separate peoples vie for his aid. Yet, despite the battle theme, the descriptions are surprisingly devoid of violence, and it is Indra as maker of space (from constriction, vs. 6) and light (from darkness, vs. 10) and as the verbal advocate for his clients (vs. 5) who stands out.

1. Start up the praise anew with songs to the sovereign king of the separate
 peoples, Indra,
 the man who overpowers men, the most munificent,
2. In whom recitations find their joy, and all (deeds) worthy of fame,
 as the aid of the waters does in the sea.
3. With my good praise I seek to entice him, the preeminent king, effective
 at raiding,
 the prizewinner, for the gains of the great (prize?).

4. To whom belong the exhilarating drinks—unfailing, deep, wide,
 overwhelming—
 that produce his excitement at the contest of champions…
5. Just upon him do they call for intercession when the stakes are set.
 Whoever has Indra—they win.

6. It's just him that the separate peoples recognize by his exploits, him by his deeds:
"That's Indra, who creates wide space!"

7. Indra is the formulator, Indra the seer, Indra the many times much-invoked
great one with great powers.
8. He is to be praised, he to be invoked—the real "real thing," powerfully ranging.
Even though alone, he is overwhelming.
9. Him with chants, him with melodies, him with songs
do the separate peoples, the settlements make strong: Indra—

10. The leader to a better state, the creator of light in combats,
conquering foes in battle.
11. He, our deliverer, much invoked, will deliver us to the far shore by boat,
beyond all hatreds, with well-being: Indra.
12. You, o Indra—with prizes of victory do honor to us, and provide us a way,
and lead us to your favor.

VIII.17 (637) Indra

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
15 verses: gāyatrī 1–13, br̥hatī 14, satobr̥hatī 15

Coming at the end of the Indra collection in this self-contained group (VIII.12–18), this hymn consists of fifteen verses and is thus longer than the two previous hymns. This over-length, combined with its metrical disunity and the varying use of the verses in later Vedic ritual, suggests that the "hymn" is actually a composite of three: verses 1–10, consisting of three tr̥cas plus a final verse; another independent tr̥ca, verses 11–13; and a final pragātha, verses 14–15. (For details, see Oldenberg 1888: 139 n. 1 and 214 n. 2.)

The first and longest of the three hymns (vss. 1–10) is a straightforward invitation to soma, urging Indra to make the journey to our sacrifice and promising an ecstatic immersion in the liquid. There are several striking images toward the end, especially that of the soma mixed with milk as a woman in disguise going to a rendezvous (if our interpretation is correct) (vs. 7), and a vivid picture of Indra in the grip of soma-exhilaration (vs. 8). Only the last verse (10), tacked onto the final tr̥ca, asks for something in return.

The other two hymns, or hymn fragments, are more opaque. The first (vss. 11–13) begins with a conventional invitation to Indra, but the following two verses address otherwise unknown men involved in some way in the soma sacrifice. The final pragātha (vss. 14–15) first gives a praiseful description of the soma drop in

verse 14, but ends with yet another unknown man also engaged in the soma sacrifice, who seems to have some success in getting Indra to drink it.

1. Drive here—for we have pressed soma for you, Indra. Drink this!
   Sit here upon this ritual grass of mine.
2. Let your hairy(-maned) fallow bays, yoked by sacred formulations,
   convey you here, Indra.
   Listen to our formulations.
3. We formulators, with you as our yokemate, call upon you, Indra—
   provided with soma, possessing pressings, we call upon the
   soma-drinker.

4. Drive here to us, who have the pressings, here to our good praises.
   Drink of the stalk, (fair-)lipped one.
5. I pour (it) into your two cheeks. Let it run along and across your limbs.
   Grasp the honey with your tongue.
6. Let it be sweet for you sweetening; (let it be) honeyed for your body.
   Let the soma be weal for your heart.

7. Let this soma, completely covered (with milk), slink forth to you,
   like (covered) women (to a rendezvous), o boundless Indra.
8. Strong-necked, bulging-bellied, mighty-armed Indra in the exhilaration
   of the stalk
   keeps smashing obstacles.
9. Indra, go forth in front, holding sway over all with your might.
   Smash obstacles, o smasher of obstacles [/Vr̥tra].

10. Let your hook be long by which you hold out goods
    to the sacrificer who presses (soma).

11. Here is your soma, Indra, purified down onto the ritual grass.
    Come here to it! Run, drink of it!
12. Śācigu, Śācipūjana, this has been pressed for your joy.
    Ākhaṇḍala, you are called forth.
13. O grandson, great-grandson of Śr̥ṅgavr̥s—your (soma)
    to-be-drunk-from-a-jar:
    upon that has (Indra) fixed his mind.

14. O Lord of the Dwelling Place, a steadfast pillar, armor for comrades
    in soma
    is the drop, a splitter of strongholds, one after the other. Indra is the
    comrade of ecstatics.
15. Pr̥dākusanu, worthy of the sacrifice, seeking cattle—even though he is
    one, he sur(rounds) the many.
    He leads forward, by thrust and grasp, the ardent horse that is Indra, to
    drink of the soma.

VIII.18 (638) Ādityas

Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
22 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tr̥cas, with a final verse

Like the other hymns to the Ādityas in VIII (47, 67), this hymn is fairly elementary and rarely strays far from its theme—the hope that the Ādityas (and, toward the end [vss. 16, 20, 21], other gods) will provide protection from various dangers and enemies and long life for us and our offspring. There is a fair amount of coherence within tr̥cas—for example, the dominance of Aditi in verses 4–6, the repetition of *śám* "weal" and the four-syllable tag refrain in verses 7–9.

1. Here and now a mortal should seek a share of their favor,
   the unprecedented (favor) of the Ādityas, at the impulsion (of Savitar),
2. For the paths of these Ādityas are without assault,
   and undeceivable are the protectors who provide strength on an
   easy road.
3. Let Savitar, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman
   extend to us that broad shelter for which we beg.

4. O goddess Aditi, you whose burden [=fetus(es)] cannot be harmed—
   come here with the gods,
   along with patrons who provide good shelter, o you dear to many,
5. For these sons of Aditi know how to keep away hostilities—
   the faultless ones who make wide (space) even out of narrow straits.
6. Let Aditi (protect) our livestock by day, let Aditi the unduplicitous (do
   so) by night;
   let ever-strengthening Aditi protect us from narrow straits.

7. And this Aditi, (like) a *banner by day, will come with her help;
   she will make wealfulness and joy. – Failures away!
8. And those two heavenly healers, the Aśvins, will make weal for us.
   They should keep defect away from here. – Failures away!
9. Agni will make weal with his fires; let the sun blaze weal for us.
   Let wind, without defect, blow weal. – Failures away!

10. Away affliction, away failure—drive away bad thought.
    O Ādityas, keep us from narrow straits.
11. Keep the arrow from us, Ādityas, and thoughtlessness.
    Set hostility aside, o you possessed of all possessions.
12. O Ādityas, extend to us the shelter that will free
    even the sinful from his sin, o you of good gifts.

13. Whatever mortal seeks to harm us with demonry,
    that man should harm his own lifetime by his own devices.

14. Evil will get the defaming, cheating mortal
    who, full of evil rage, is double-dealing right here in our midst.
15. You are in the midst of simple folk, o gods: you know the mortal in their hearts—
    both the one who is double-dealing right here and the one who isn't, o good ones.

16. We would choose the shelter of the mountains and of the waters.
    O Heaven and Earth, put defect at a distance from us.
17. You, o good ones—with your beneficial shelter as a boat
    carry us to the far shore, beyond all difficulties.
18. For the sake of progeny and posterity make for us a longer lifetime to live,
    o very great Ādityas.

19. There is a sacrifice closer to you than your anger, Ādityas. Have mercy!
    Only in you do we abide—in your kinship.
20. The Maruts' lofty defense, the god Rescuer, the Aśvins,
    Mitra and Varuṇa—(all of them) do we beg for our well-being.
21. O Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa, o Maruts—your faultless, manly, praiseworthy
    protection providing threefold defense—extend that to us.

22. For even though we are men, whose kinsman is death, o Ādityas,
    extend our lifetime for us to live.

The next four hymns (VIII.19–22) are attributed to Sobhari Kāṇva by the Anukramaṇī and are dedicated to Agni (VIII.19, 37 verses), the Maruts (VIII.20, 26 verses), Indra (VIII.21, 18 verses), and the Aśvins (VIII.22, 18 verses). Sobhari addresses himself in every hymn but VIII.21.

VIII.19 (639) Agni (1–33), Ādityas (34–35), Trasadasyu's Dānastuti (36–37)

Sobhari Kāṇva
37 verses: 1–26, 28–33 pragātha strophes of kakubh (8 12 8) and satobr̥hatī (12 8 12 8), except dvipadā virāj 27, uṣṇih 34, satobr̥hatī 35, kakubh 36, paṅkti 37

Save for VI.16 with its 48 verses, this is the longest hymn dedicated to Agni in the R̥gveda, but unlike the composite VI.16, this hymn shows clear signs of unity. This unity is evident (though more clearly in the Sanskrit) in the constant recycling and recombination of vocabulary, especially the lexicon related to sacrifice. Thematically the hymn focuses on Agni's role in the sacrifice and on mortals' tasks

in helping him fulfill that role. Numerous verses promise the favor and aid of Agni to the mortal who properly serves the fire (see, e.g., vss. 5–6, 9–14).

This reciprocal relationship between the god Agni and mortal men and Agni's mediating position between gods and men provide other themes in the hymn. The first verses (1–4) emphasize Agni's divine nature even while sketching his role as the Hotar parallel to mortal priests and chosen by them (esp. vs. 3ab), but this equivocal position of Agni is explored differently later in the hymn. Verse 24 again puts heavy emphasis on the fact that Agni is a god and immortal and also the Hotar acting for and established by men, but here he seems to be acting almost like a mortal himself—seeking the rewards of the sacrifice like a human priest. This subtle role shift leads to a more explicit and otherwise unthinkable one in the next verses (25–27), where the poet imagines himself as the god and Agni as his mortal server and claims that he, the poet, would act beneficently. (For a similar role reversal but with Indra and his mortal worshiper, see nearby VIII.14.) This flight of fancy ends quickly, and the proper relations between man and god are restored in verse 28.

The hymn also has a political agenda, coming to a climax in verses 32–33, but foreshadowed at various places earlier in the hymn. In verse 32 the poet announces that he and his fellows have come to the fire belonging to the great king Trasadasyu, the fire on which all other fires are dependent (vs. 33). As Proferes convincingly argues (2007: 33–34 and passim), the fire represents the king's sovereignty and is depicted as being made up of the fires of the individual peoples who give allegiance to the king, the brilliance belonging to each of these peoples being brought together in a team. Agni is thus not only the mediator positioned between men and gods, but also among different groups of men, and in both cases he is chosen for the role, put in that position, by men acting voluntarily.

The model of the sacrifice as reciprocal action and responsibility provides an implicit model for the state. As noted above, earlier parts of the hymn hint at what is to come. In verse 7 the poet hopes that his group can use their fires to provide good fire for an unidentified plural "you"—quite possibly the larger polity. The plural "fires" is significant: though in ritual context it can easily be taken as referring to the three fires on the ritual ground, in a political reading it can represent the dependent fires of verse 33. The next verse (8) refers to Agni as "a guest associated with alliance" (*átithiḥ . . . mitríyaḥ*). Again in ritual context this refers to the god's presence as guest in the house of a mortal and the alliance between gods and men thus effected, but in a political reading the alliance is the banding together of the peoples under Trasadasyu represented by Trasadasyu's fire. In verse 14 we find the curious and syntactically unusual expression "who will piously offer boundlessness throughout the domains." The word "boundlessness" is *áditi*, usually used as the name of the goddess Aditi, mother of the Ādityas, but more easily interpreted as a common noun here. Again, in a ritual context it may mean that the ritual ground is equivalent to the whole world and thus unbounded, but in a political context it may refer to the erasure of boundaries

among the peoples who give allegiance to Trasadasyu and his fire. It may also indirectly promise the favor of the Ādityas, the gods who oversee the relationships among men, to the men who subscribe to this allegiance. The principal Ādityas, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman (as well as Bhaga), show up in verse 16, and already Agni was said to be Mitraic (/associated with alliance) in verse 8 (see also vs. 25). It is surely significant that the two verses following the climactic declaration about Trasadasyu's sovereign fire (vss. 34–35) are dedicated to the Ādityas, specifically Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. The final two verses (36–37) are a brief and uncomplex dānastuti of Trasadasyu.

It is hoped that this introduction gives some sense of the richness and intricate interconnections of this hymn; much more could be said.

1. Praise him who possesses solar glory. The gods have run to the god, the spoked wheel (of the sacrifice).
   They have conducted the oblation among the gods.
2. Reverently invoke him of extensive generosity, o inspired poet—Agni of brilliant flame, the guider
   of this ritual offering of soma, o Sobhari. (Bring him) forth as the foremost for the ceremony.

3. We have chosen you, the best sacrificer, a god, an immortal, as Hotar among the gods—
   (you,) very effective for this sacrifice,
4. The child of nourishment, providing good fortune and good light, Agni of fairest flame.
   He will win for us by sacrifice in heaven the favor of Mitra and Varuṇa and that of the waters in heaven.

5. The mortal who by kindling, who by pouring, who by knowledge performs pious service to Agni, and
   who conducts good ceremonies with reverence,
6. It is his steeds that speed swiftly, his glory that is most brilliant,
   and no anxiety, whether god-made or mortal-made, will reach him from anywhere.

7. With our fires might we provide good fire to (all of) you [=assembled peoples]. O son of strength, o lord of nourishment,
   kindly disposed toward us, you provide good heroes.
8. Being lauded like a guest associated with our alliance, Agni is worth acquiring like a chariot.
   Peaceful ways that bring success abide in you: you are king of riches.

9. The mortal who conducts pious ceremonies in the stipulated way, he is to be lauded, o Agni, you who provide good fortune.
   Let him be a winner with his insights—

10. The one for whose ceremony you stand erect, he, controlling heroes, achieves success—
    and (let) him (be) a winner with his steeds, and with his extollers; a winner of the stake with his champions.

11. The one in whose house the wondrous form Agni, possessing all desirable things, should take delight in the praise song
    or in the oblations, while he [=Agni] keeps laboring at his labors,
12. Or in the gifts of the inspired praiser who is quickest, o youthful (son) of strength.
    make *his* speech, when he has found it, one that brings the gods below and is above (that of) mortals, o good one.

13. Who seeks to attract Agni here with the giving of oblations, or (seeks to attract) the very skillful one with acts of reverence,
    or him of nimble flame with song,
14. Who with kindling and with sharpening (of it [=fire]) piously offers boundlessness throughout his [=Agni's] domains,
    that mortal, provided with good fortune, will cross over all things and (all) peoples with his insights and his brilliance, as if through the water.

15. O Agni, bring here the brilliance that will overpower any devourer in his seat
    and the battle fury of the ill-intentioned man.
16. (The brilliance) by which Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman see, by which the Nāsatyas and Bhaga,
    in that (brilliance) of yours might we receive ritual shares, (becoming) the best pathfinders by your power, helped (also) by you, Indra.

17. It is those of good intention who have installed you who provide the sight for men, o Agni, o inspired one—
    the inspired priests (have installed you) as the very effective one, o god.
18. Just those (have made) the altar, o you of good fortune, they the poured offering; they have made the soma-pressing (to be) in heaven.
    Just those have won the great stake along with its prizes who set their desire down in you.

19. Auspicious is Agni when he is bepoured; auspicious is our gift, auspicious our ceremony, o you who provide good fortune,
    and auspicious our lauds.
20. Set your auspicious mind on the overcoming of obstacles, the mind with which you will be overpowering in battles.
    Loosen the sturdy (bows) of those that are greatly defiant. Might we win with your superior powers.

21. With my hymn I reverently invoke the one established by Manu, the circle of spokes whom the gods have set down as their messenger,
the best sacrificer, who carries the oblations.
22. To the sharp-fanged one, the ruler of tender age—to Agni do you sing delight,
Agni who adorns his mass of heroes with his liberal gifts, when he is bepoured with ghee.

23. When, bepoured with ghee, Agni bears his axe up and down,
like a (rich) lord (he bears [=wears]) his cloak [=ghee].
24. Who, the god established by Manu [/man], set the oblations in motion with his sweet-smelling mouth—
he seeks to win desirable things for himself as the Hotar who conducts ceremonies well, (though he is also) an immortal god.

25. If, Agni, you were mortal and I were immortal—o you with the might of Mitra,
o son of strength bepoured (with ghee)—
26. I would not give you over to the curse, o good one, nor to evil, o my companion.
My praiser would not be in want nor ill-established, Agni, nor in an evil way,
27. But well kept here in my dwelling, like a son in that of his father. Let our oblation go forth to the gods!

28. Might I always keep company with your help that is so very nearby, o Agni, at your pleasure, o good one—
I a mortal, (with that) of a god.
29. With your will may I win, with your gifts, with your lauds, o Agni.
They say that just you are solicitude for me, o good one. O Agni, be aroused to give.

30. He advances himself through your help well provided with heroes and bringing prizes—
(the man) whose companionship you will choose.
31. Your drop [=spark], accompanied by dark [=smoke], bellowing as it is kindled at the right ritual moment, has taken, o you who desire to win.
You are dear to the great dawns; you rule [/shine] through the nights and at the dawns.

32. We, the Sobhari, have come to the one possessing a thousand testicles, well provided with superior power, for his help,
the sovereign king, (the fire) belonging to Trasadasyu—

33. You, o Agni, on whom the other fire are dependent, like branches (on a tree).
    I team up the brilliant glories of the peoples as (poets team up) inspired poems, while I strengthen your powers to rule.

34. O you Ādityas without deceit—the mortal whom you lead to the far shore—
    you who are the best givers among all the generous—
35. Any (man) holding power throughout the sons of Manu—you kings who conquer territories—
    might we be those to you, o Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman; might we alone be the charioteers of truth.

36. Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, has given me five hundred brides—
    the lord of settlements who is most munificent to his compatriot.
37. And, at the source of the (River) Suvāstu, the dusky (horse) of Prayiyu, of Vayiyu,
    became the leader of thrice seventy (cows) for me. Good is the lord of gifts.

VIII.20 (640) Maruts

Sobharī Kāṇva
26 verses: kakubh alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

The typical Marut themes are deftly woven together in this hymn. After inviting them to the sacrifice (vss. 1–2), the poet first describes the effects in nature of the storm they embody (vss. 3–6) and then their flashy beauty and that of their chariot (vss. 7–12), ending this section with two verses (13–14) on their lack of individuality (see also vs. 21). The remainder of the hymn concerns the generosity of the Maruts and begs them to display it in response to Sobhari's hymn: the poet addresses himself in verses 19–20. Unlike the generic gifts generally asked for in R̥gvedic hymns, the final verses make it clear that the poet has a specific request: Marut medicine to heal the afflicted (vss. 23–26). Their association with healing comes through their father Rudra.

The hymn exhibits a light touch and has a number of neat turns of phrase—for instance, verse 8, where "the music of the Sobharis is anointed with cows" indicates that their hymn reaps a bovine reward from the patron, or verse 19, with its pun on the participle *cárkr̥ṣat* meaning both "plowing" and "celebrating."

1. Come here; don't mean harm. Setting out, don't stay away, o you of equal spirit,
   who are able to bow even the fixed things.

2. With your (chariots) whose wheel-rims are firm, with your very bright lights—o Maruts, masters of the R̥bhus, o Rudras—
with refreshment come here to us today, here to the sacrifice, seeking the Sobharis, o you who are craved by many.

3. For we know the mighty forcefulness of the Rudrian Maruts, the strenuous ones,
of quick Viṣṇu, of the ones who grant rewards.
4. The islands keep flying further apart; misfortune stands still; they [=Maruts] yoke both world-halves.
The wasteplaces rise forth, when you stir (them), o you self-radiant ones with beautiful bangles.

5. (When you stir) even the unshakeable things on your drive, the mountains and the lord of the forest keep resounding.
The earth trembles at your journeys.
6. To allow your onslaught to drive by, o Maruts, heaven raises itself higher aloft,
when the men, strong in arm, keep putting their energies on display on their own bodies.

7. According to their nature, following their beauty, the men—greatly vibrant, impetuous, bullish in breath,
unobstructed in breath—drive themselves.
8. The music of the Sobharis is anointed with cows. Onto the chariot, into the golden (chariot) cask
(come) those well-born (Maruts), akin to a cow [=Pr̥śni], (for us) to enjoy nourishment; the great ones (come here) now for us to gain.

9. O you who rain unguents, present oblations to your own bullish Marutian troop
whose leader is a bull [=Indra].
10. O Maruts, with your chariot with its bullish horses, bullish breath, bullish wheel-naves,
come here at will, like winged falcons, to pursue our oblations, o men.

11. Common to them (all) is their unguent; their brilliants glint on their arms.
Their spears keep flashing.
12. These mighty bulls with mighty arms do not arrange (such things just) on their bodies:
taut bows and weapons are on your chariots, beauties on your faces.

13. Of them whose name is vibrant and widespread like a flood, there is just one (name) for each and every one of them to enjoy.
Their might is like the life force of their fathers.

14. Extol these Maruts; praise them. For of these boisterous ones,
as of wheel-spokes, there is no last one. This is so as to their giving; as to their greatness is this so.

15. Very fortunate is he who was amid your forms of help at earlier dawnings, o Maruts,
or who will be also now.
16. Or the prize-seeker whose oblations you come here to pursue, o men.
He will attain to your favors, you shakers, along with brilliant things and the winning of prizes.

17. Just as they wish, so shall it be—they,
the sons of Rudra, lord of heaven, the ritual adepts, the youths,
18. The Maruts of good drops who deserve (the soma-drink) and who go about practicing generosity all together.
With a better heart even than this [=usual generosity], o youths, turn yourselves hither toward us.

19. To the youths, to the bulls, the pure ones, sing with your newest hymn, o Sobhari,
like a plowman to his cows [/celebrating (the Maruts) like cows].
20. Those who are victorious like a fist-fighter, to be invoked in all contests, among (all) Hotars,
those, like lustrous bulls, receiving the most praises—extol them with a hymn: the Maruts, yes!

21. Cows also, likewise akin through common birth, o Maruts of equal spirit,
lick each other's humps.
22. The mortal also will draw near to brotherhood with you, you dancers with brilliants on your breasts.
Take note of us, Maruts, for your firmly founded friendship exists always.

23. O Maruts of good drops, convey here to us (some) of your Marut medicine,
you comrades in the span.
24. Those with which you aid the Sindhu, with which you triumph, with which you favor Krivi,
with those kindly forms of help be a joy to us, you who are joy itself, you who do not partner hatred.

25. O Maruts possessing good ritual grass—what medicine is in the Sindhu, what in the Asiknī, what in the seas,
what in the mountains,

26. Seeing it, you carry it all on your bodies. With it intercede for us.
 To ground (should go) the malady of the afflicted; make what has gone
  awry right again.

VIII.21 (641) Indra (1–16), Citra's Dānastuti (17–18)

Sobhari Kāṇva
18 verses: kakubh alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn ends with a brief dānastuti to king Citra (vss. 17–18) and begins with a pun on his name: in verse 1 Indra is described as *citrá* "brilliant." In between the poet ponders the various different relationships that he and his people might have with Indra, deploying a surprising range of terminology: "comrade" (vss. 2, 8, 14, 15), "kin" (vs. 4), "rival" (vs. 13), "friend" (vs. 13), and "father" (vs. 14). Amid the standard invitations to the soma sacrifice (e.g., vss. 3, 5) and praise of Indra's qualities (e.g., vs. 10), the poet depicts himself and his people as previously deprived of Indra (vs. 7), but as possessing hopes and visions of the god's entering into relationship with them (see esp. vs. 6), and he imagines what they could achieve if this relationship were activated (vss. 11–12). The stress on the 1st plural "we" (including Indra along with the mortals) and on "our" states of mind is highly unusual in R̥gvedic poetry.

The poet's conception of possible relationships develops in even more unpredictable ways toward the end of the hymn. The pragātha strophe consisting of verses 13–14 begins strikingly by calling Indra friendless, and continues in verse 14 with a brief and idiosyncratic characterization of some who don't have relationships with Indra. The following pragātha (vss. 15–16) urges "us" not to miss our own chance with Indra, with a noteworthy comparison of "our" potentially damaging lack of activity to that of aging spinsters.

Thus, though much of the hymn contains conventional Indra-hymn material, there is a distinct "psychological" tinge to the poet's depiction of the interaction of his group with Indra. This depiction of an emotional bond between the worshipers and the deity makes the abrupt transition to the dānastuti all the more surprising, especially because the dānastuti seems to belittle Indra's giving in comparison to King Citra's.

1. O you without precedent—we, seeking help like people carrying
  something massive,
 call upon you, the brilliant, in the prize contest.
2. That powerful youth of ours—in his daring—strode right up to you for
  help in action,
 for it is just you that we, your comrades, have chosen as the helper who
  brings gain, o Indra.

3. Drive here. Here are the drops, o lord of horses, lord of cows, lord of fields.
   Drink the soma, soma-lord.
4. Because we inspired poets without (such) kin hold fast to you who have (those [=horses, etc.] as kin, o Indra,
   come here with all of them, which are your deposits, to drink the soma, o bull.

5. Like birds (in a tree), sitting by your exhilarating, strengthening honey prepared with cows,
   we keep bellowing to you, o Indra.
6. When we address you with this homage, will you hesitate even for a moment?
   Here are desires, and you are the giver, o possessor of the fallow bays. Here are we; here are our visions.

7. Only recently have we come together with your help, Indra, for previously, o master of the stones,
   we have not known your abundance.
8. We (now) know your comradeship and sustenance, o champion. We beg these of you, o wielder of the mace.
   And so make us sharp, good one, whenever a prize of cattle is (at stake), o you of beautiful lips.

9. Who previously led us to this better state right here, him shall I praise on your behalf,
   o comrades, for his help—Indra,
10. Possessor of the fallow bays, lord of settlements, conquering territories. Because as ever it is he who has reached exhilaration,
    the bounteous one will pursue for us, his praisers, a hundred in cattle and horses.

11. Surely with you as our yokemate, o bull, we could talk back to the snorter
    at the concourse of the people possessing cattle.
12. As decisive actors, we could be victorious in the decisive action, o much-invoked one; we could stand up to those of evil vision.
    With our superior men we could smash the obstacle [/Vr̥tra] and swell with strength. O Indra, you have pursued our visions.

13. You are without rival, but by the same token, without friend, Indra, by birth and from of old.
    Only in battle do you seek friendship.
14. You never take on a rich man for companionship. The booze-fueled revile you.
    When you make your roar, you just shove (them all) together. It is because of that that you are called on like a father.

15. When we are in companionship with one such as you, Indra, let us not, like foolish (spinsters) who grow old at home,
    (just) sit still when (the soma) has been pressed.
16. Let us not miss out on your largesse, you whose gift is cattle. Indra, let us not complain about you.
    Seize hold of even the firmly fixed (goods) of the stranger and bring them here. Those who receive your gifts are not to be swindled.

17. Is it Indra (who gives) so great a bounty, or well-portioned Sarasvatī who gives the goods?
    Or is it you, o Citra, (who give) to the pious man?
18. Citra is the only king; the other petty little ones who (live) along the Sarasvatī are only kinglets—
    for like Parjanya with rain, he will thunder [/stretch forth] as he gives a thousand ten thousands.

VIII.22 (642) Aśvins

Sobhari Kāṇva
18 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī 1–7; anuṣṭubh 8; kakubh alternating with satobṛhatī 9–10, 13–18; kakubh 11; madhyejyotis 12, all arranged in pragāthas.

The metrical complexity of this hymn is not matched by corresponding complexity of content. The hymn focuses especially on the chariot of the Aśvins, as well as on their journey to us, the sacrifice with which we will welcome them, and the multiform aid we hope for in return.

Nonetheless there are a few striking images and turns of phrase, particularly in verse 6 where the Aśvins "plow barley with a wolf," an expression that cannot be separated from the similar one in I.117.21, likewise an Aśvin hymn, where they "scatter barley with a wolf." Starting with Yaska (6.26), the "wolf" has regularly been identified as a type of plow, though this recourse to agricultural technology could be taken as a reductive attempt to explain away the wondrous nature of the Aśvins' feats—here perhaps their ability to harness the power of a dangerous and semi-wild beast for a civilizing task. On the wolf as a cross-category in the Vedic conceptual universe, situated between the wild and the civilized and partaking of both, see Jamison (2008b).

1. I have called here this most wondrous chariot for help today,
   the one that you mounted for Sūryā, o Aśvins easy to call, you who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts]—
2. (The chariot) that is first to bring prosperity [?], that is easy to call, eagerly sought by many, enjoyable, first in the prize-contests,
   accompanied by favors, free of hatred, and without fault, o Sobhari.

3. These two gods who most often appear in many places, the Aśvins—with our acts of reverence
   may we bring them here nearby for help: they go to the house of the pious man.
4. One wheel of your chariot speeds around; the other, (though) at rest, drives you onward.
   Let your favor run to us here, like a cow (to its calf), o lords of beauty.

5. Your chariot with its three chariot-boxes and golden reins, o Aśvins,
   the famous one that busily circles around heaven and earth—with that, come here, o Nāsatyas.
6. Rendering service to Manu, early in the day you plow barley with a wolf.
   O Aśvins, lords of beauty, today we would praise you together with your favors.

7. O you whose goods are prizewinning mares, drive right up to us along the paths of truth,
   along which you spur Tr̥kṣi, son of Trasadasyu, for great sovereignty, o bulls.
8. Here is the soma pressed for you with stones, o you men with bullish goods.
   Drive here to drink the soma; drink it in the house of the pious man.

9. Ascend onto the chariot, into the golden (chariot-)cask, o Aśvins with bullish goods,
   and so hitch up refreshments rich in fat.
10. With those (forms of help) with which you help Paktha, with which Adhrigu, with which Babhru deprived of pleasure,
    with these come to us right away and swiftly, o Aśvins. Heal what is ailing.

11. When we Adhrigus call upon the Aśvins, the two Adhrigu [/who are not poor], at this very time of day—
    we expressing admiration with our hymns—
12. With those (forms of help) drive here, o bulls, right to my call, which brings all good things and all that is worth desiring—
    (drive here) with refreshment, as the most bounteous ones who most often appear in many places—with those (forms of help) with which they [=the Maruts?] strengthened Krivi, with those come here.

13. To these two at this very time of the days, to these Aśvins do I appeal, celebrating them,
    and these two do we beseech with our acts of reverence—
14. Just these two in the evening, these two lords of beauty at dawn, and these two who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts] on their journey.

Don't look over and beyond us to a cheating mortal, o Rudras whose goods are prizewinning mares.

15. In the early morning I call their easily moving (chariot) to move easily here, or (rather I call) the overpowering Aśvins along with their chariot—
I, Śobharī, like a father.
16. With (your chariot) swift as thought, o bulls roused to exuberance, with your forms of help that come quickly,
even from far away come to be here for our help with your many (forms of help), you who bring many benefits.

17. O Aśvins, you superior men who are first to drink the honey, to us here drive your course providing horses,
cattle, and gold, o wondrous ones.
18. An abundance of good heroes, of good standing and well in advance, desirable, unassailable by the demonic,
and all things of value might we acquire at this journey of yours, o you whose goods are prize mares.

The next small collection of hymns (VIII.23–26) is attributed to Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva, with hymns to Agni (VIII.23), Indra (VIII.24), Mitra and Varuṇa (VIII.25), and the Aśvins and Vāyu (VIII.26). The names Vyaśva and its patronymic Vaiyaśva occur several times in these hymns, as does the name of the patron (Varo) Suṣāman, and the hymns are also characterized by the almost exclusive use of the uṣṇih meter (8 8 12). See Oldenberg (1888: 211–13).

VIII.23 (643) Agni

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
30 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tṛcas

The poet begins the hymn by urging himself to perform his sacrificial tasks (vss. 1–2ab), ending this little section with vocatives addressed to himself but seemingly designed to identify himself with his divine target Agni: "belonging to all domains" is often an epithet of Agni (as well as of Indra) and "having all in mind" (*viśvámanas*) could be a divine descriptor. However, at least according to the Anukramaṇī, it is the poet's own name, and he then (vs. 2c) speaks in his own 1st-person voice. This interactive quality is prominent throughout the hymn. The poet's self-address returns in verse 24, and in between he also addresses in the 2nd-person plural the assembled priests and worshipers, on whose behalf he is working (vss. 7–9; see esp. 9a, where he calls them "seekers of the truth"). (On poetic self-address see Jamison 2009a.) Agni's role in this social context, as clanlord of

clans, is also emphasized (vss. 10, 13–14, 20). Manu, the mythical founder of the larger Ārya sacrificial community known as the "descendants of Manu," is also duly remembered (vss. 13, 17, 25–26), as are the mythical seer Uśanā Kāvya (vs. 17) and the poet's immediate ancestor, the seer Vyaśva (vss. 16, 23), whose devotion to Agni and lucrative relationship with his patron, Ukṣan, merit mention and provide a model for Vaiyaśva's own gentle hint to his patron Varo Suṣāman (vs. 28). Thus the poet situates his praise of the god and his requests to him in a web of social relations and mutual dependency pertaining both in the current time and in the long history of the descendants of Manu.

Both the praise and the requests follow the common tropes of the genre, though often nicely executed. The focus is on Agni as the messenger of the gods and as the carrier of our oblations to them. Some of the tr̥cas show thematic or syntactic unity (e.g., vss. 13–15 against demons and cheats), but the tr̥ca structure is not prominent, and there are bridges across tr̥cas (e.g., the messenger theme in vss. 18–19).

1. Reverently invoke him to receive (our offerings); sacrifice to Jātavedas,
   possessing curling smoke and flames that cannot be grasped,
2. To Agni the giver, with your hymn, o you common to all domains, who
   have all in mind [/Viśvamanas (=the poet)].
   And I shall praise the competitors [=flames], (drivers) of chariots,
3. Whose onward thrust, worthy of verses, (aims) to seize refreshments and
   nourishments.
   By close searching the driver [=Agni] finds the goods.

4. His flame has stood up and outward, the unaging flame of the
   shining one,
   of the very bright one of scorching fang, the glory of a warrior band.
5. Stand up with your divine body while you are being praised, o you who
   conduct good ceremonies,
   with your gaze (on us), blazing with your lofty radiance.
6. O Agni, drive (to the gods) with our good lauds, pouring oblations in
   yourself in the proper sequence,
   as you have become our oblation-carrying messenger.

7. I call upon Agni on your behalf, the foremost Hotar of the settled
   domains.
   I shall hymn him with this speech, and I shall praise him for you all,
8. Him of unerring will, whom, together with his body, they sweeten with
   their sacrifices,
   him, like an ally, well established among the people who abide in truth.
9. O you (people) who seek truth—in him abiding in truth, bringing success
   to the sacrifice with our hymn,
   in him do they [=the gods] take pleasure, in the footprint of our homage.

10. Let our sacrifices come in unbroken sequence here to the best of the Aṅgirases,
who is the most glorious Hotar here among the clans.
11. O unaging Agni, these (flames) of yours, being kindled as lofty light,
are displaying their power like bullish horses.
12. O lord of nourishments, give us wealth with an abundance of heroes.
Further us in combats when progeny and posterity are at stake.

13. When the clanlord, whetted, is well pleased in the clan of Manu,
Agni repels all demonic powers.
14. O Agni, in harkening to my new praise song, you clanlord and hero,
with your searing heat burn down the wily demons.
15. Not by any wile should a cheating mortal be master of him
who offers ritual service to Agni with gifts of oblations.

16. The seer Vyaśva, seeking bulls [/Ukṣan (=his patron)], pleased you, the finder of goods.
For great wealth might we kindle you.
17. Uśanā Kāvya set you down as Hotar—
you to win (goods) by sacrifice for Manu as Jātavedas.
18. Because all the gods, altogether, made you their messenger,
by harkening (to them), o god, you became the first one worthy of the sacrifice.

19. This same immortal should the mortal, the hero, make his messenger—
the pure one of extensive power whose course is black.
20. With ladles extended, we would call upon him of good radiance and blazing flame,
the unaging and ancient Agni, to be invoked by the clans.
21. The mortal who has dedicated a poured offering with gifts of oblations to him
receives abundant prosperity and glory in heroes.

22. (It goes) first toward Agni Jātavedas, foremost at the sacrifices—
the ladle full of the oblation goes with homage.
23. Like Vyaśva, we would do honor to Agni with these most distinguished (thoughts),
to him of blazing flame with most munificent thoughts.
24. Now chant to him of extensive power with praise songs like sturdy posts [/like Sthūrayūpa],
o seer, son of Vyaśva—to the Agni of the household.

25. Him, the guest of the descendants of Manu, the son of the forest-lords [=trees],
ancient Agni do the inspired priests reverently invoke for help.

26. Because he, the great one, is superior to all, (let) the oblations of the descendants of Manu (also be) superior.
    O Agni, sit down on the ritual grass with homage.
27. Win for us many desirable things. Win of the wealth eagerly sought by many—
    accompanied by good heroes, offspring, and glory.

28. O Agni, give the impetus to generosity to Varo Suṣāman and to his people,
    each and every one, always—o youngest good one.
29. For you are the furtherer. Uncover for us refreshments consisting of cows
    and the winning of great wealth, o Agni.
30. Agni, you are glorious. Convey Mitra and Varuṇa here,
    the sovereign kings possessing the truth and of refined skill.

VIII.24 (644) Indra

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
30 verses: uṣṇih (except anuṣṭubh 30), arranged in tr̥cas

The first twenty-seven verses of this hymn are dedicated to Indra, while the final tr̥ca (vss. 28–30) is a dānastuti of the patron Varo Suṣāman, with Dawn the divinity addressed because of her association with the distribution of the priestly gift. The first two verses of the dānastuti are unexceptional in diction and tone, but the last verse (30) contains puns and neologisms, as often in dānastutis.

The rest of the hymn contains fairly standard praise of Indra, with special emphasis on his generosity—*rā́dhas* "generosity" is something of a signature word in the hymn, occurring six times—though his powers do not go unmentioned. The need to praise Indra to stimulate his giving is also a recurrent motif in the hymn, and the poet calls upon both himself (sometimes by name) and his companions to provide that praise (see, e.g., vss. 1, 14, 19, 22–23). Such interactivity was also characteristic of the preceding hymn (VIII.23) to Agni.

The hymn consists of tr̥cas, but there is little unity within most of these triplets; instead, there are a number of instances of cross-tr̥ca transitions (see, e.g., vss. 3/4, 6/7, 9/10). The poet also makes considerable use of alliteration and, especially, of pairing derivationally related words. Verse 10 provides a particularly fine example of the latter practice.

1. Comrades, we direct our formulation to Indra who bears the mace—
   I shall praise him on your behalf—to the most manly, bold one.
2. For you are famed because of your swelling might and, as Vr̥tra-smasher, because of your Vr̥tra-smashing [/obstacle-smashing].
   With your bounties you outdo the bounteous ones in piety, o champion.

3. Being praised, bring here to us wealth that offers most brilliant fame—
you who are exclusively the good giver, o master of the fallow bays.

4. Tear out what is exclusive and dear to the peoples, Indra.
Being praised, bring it here boldly, bold one.
5. Hindrances obstruct neither your left nor your right hand,
nor do repulsions, o master of the fallow bays, in your quests for cattle.
6. I fit you out with my songs, as a pen with cows, o master of the stones.
Fulfill the desire and the mind of the singer.

7. All these things of the one who has all in mind [/Viśvamanas (=poet)]—o best Vṛtra-smasher—
study them well though our insight, o forceful leader, o good one.
8. O Vṛtra-smasher, o champion, might we know of this newer,
eagerly sought generosity of yours, o good one, much-invoked.
9. For, Indra, just as for you there exists a swelling might that cannot be encompassed, o dancer,
your giving to the pious man cannot be impaired, o much-invoked one.

10. Rain yourself down, o you who are greater than great, o best of men, for great generosity.
Being yourself steadfast, stand fast, bounteous one, for bounteous giving.
11. Never have our hopes gone to any other place than you, o master of the stones.
Bounteous one, exert your ability for us with your help.
12. For surely I do not find any other than you, for generosity, o dancer,
for wealth, for brilliance, and for swelling might, o you who long for songs.

13. Pour here the drop for Indra: he will drink the somian honey.
He will spur himself on in his generosity and greatness.
14. I have addressed the lord of the fallow bays as he engorges his skill.
Now listen to the son of Aśva as he praises.
15. For surely never before has a greater hero than you been born,
neither in wealth—not in just such a way (as you are)—nor in favor.

16. (Pour) right here what is more invigorating than honey, or pour, Adhvaryu, (what is more invigorating) than the stalk,
for in this way the ever-strengthening hero is praised.
17. O Indra, mounter of the fallow bays, none has reached up to your foremost praise hymn
in swelling strength nor in favor.

18. Seeking fame, we have called upon the lord of prizes on your behalf, (comrades,)
upon him who is to be strengthened by unremitting sacrifices.

19. Come now! Comrades, let us praise Indra, the superior man worthy of praise,
who all alone surmounts all the separate peoples.

20. For the heaven-ruling one who does not withhold cattle, who seeks cattle, speak a wondrous speech,
sweeter than ghee and honey,

21. For him whose heroic deeds are immeasurable, whose generosity is not to be circumscribed,
whose priestly gift surmounts everything, like light.

22. Like Vyaśva, praise Indra, who controls the prizewinning (horse) that rides the wave,
liberally apportioning the property of the stranger to the pious man.

23. In just this way now, o Vaiyaśva, praise him anew [/to the nines, and then] a tenth time—
the one who knows well, worthy to be celebrated by those who roam.

24. For you know how to avoid calamities day after day, o you with mace in hand,
as a preener [=water bird] does snares.

25. Bring that help here, Indra, with which, o most wondrous one, (you are there) for the (ritually) active man.
Once again pierce (Śuṣṇa?) for Kutsa and force (him) down.

26. We beg you now for a new (life?) for an older (man), o most wondrous one.
You are victorious over all our antagonists—

27. (You, the one) who releases (us) from the bear and from constraint or who (releases constraint) from the Ārya amid the seven rivers.
You have made the Dāsa's weapon bow, o you of powerful manliness.

28. Just as you conveyed wealth to Varo Suṣāman for his gain
and to the Vyaśvas, o well-portioned (Dawn) rich in prizewinning mares,

29. (Even so) let the priestly gift of Nārya come to the Vyaśvas, who provide soma,
as well as substantial generosity in hundreds and thousands.

30. When the sacrificer will ask you: "Where (is he), you where-actor?"
(you will answer:) "This 'Vala' [=the patron Varo Suṣāman], who is set apart, is descending toward the Gomatī (River) [/pen full of cows]."

VIII.25 (645) Mitra and Varuṇa (1–9, 13–24) and the All Gods (10–12)

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
24 verses: uṣṇih, arranged in tr̥cas

The only hymn in Maṇḍala VIII ostensibly devoted to Mitra and Varuṇa, it keeps its focus on these two gods only during the first part of the hymn (vss. 1–9), which celebrates them as sovereign kings possessing the truth. Starting in verse 10 other gods join the group besought for help and protection. In particular the Sun, as a representative of the Ādityas, is the main subject of two tr̥cas (vss. 16–21). The final verses of the hymn (starting with vs. 19) turn their attention to the sacrificial setting. A simile concerning the ritual fire in verse 19 serves as a transition to this scene, and an address to the Sun in verse 21, which introduces the poet's "benefactors," likewise produces a transition to the final tr̥ca (vss. 22–24), a dānastuti praising the gift of several horses and a chariot.

Although the thematic structure of the hymn roughly tracks the arrangement in tr̥cas, the tr̥cas do not have strong internal cohesion, and there is relatively little verbal unity within them.

1. To you two, the herdsmen of all, the gods worthy of the sacrifice among the gods,
   truth-possessing and of refined skill, shall I sacrifice.
2. They are like two charioteers along the (home) stretch (of a racecourse), the two allies [=mitras], Mitra and Varuṇa, who is of strong will,
   both well-born descendants from of old, whose commandments are upheld.
3. Their mother, great truth-possessing Aditi, gave birth
   to the two who possess all possessions, whose greatness (goes) forward to lordship.

4. Great Mitra and Varuṇa, sovereign kings, gods and lords [/devas and asuras],
   truth-possessing, loudly sound their lofty truth.
5. The two grandsons of great strength, the sons of skill, strong-willed,
   possessing fat drops, dwell in the house of refreshment.
6. You two who control the drops, the earthly and heavenly refreshments—
   let your cloud-accompanied rains drift here.

7. The two who from lofty heaven look down upon (us) as if upon your herds,
   the truth-possessing ones were installed as sovereign kings for reverence.

8. Truth-possessing, strong-willed, the two took their place for sovereign kingship.
   Their commandments upheld, the rulers attained their rule.
9. Better even than the eye at finding the way, by means of eyesight without motes,
   even when blinking, the two attentive ones remain attentive.

10. And let the goddess Aditi, let the two Nāsatyas [=Aśvins] give us room;
    let the Maruts, whose strength has increased, give room.
11. You (all) of good drops—give room to our roar by day and by night.
    Not suffering harm, might we be accompanied by protectors.
12. Not suffering harm, we (sing) to Viṣṇu of good drops who does not smite.
    Listen, o River traveling your own course, (for us) to be first in your thought.

13. We choose what is worth choosing, the best choice, worthy of protection,
    which Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman protect.
14. And that (let) the River among the waters (grant) to us, that (grant) the Maruts, that the Aśvins,
    and Indra and Viṣṇu—the generous ones of one accord.
15. For these superior men strike against the hostility of any zealot,
    like roiling (rivers) their sharp surge.

16. This (Sun) here, as clanlord, gazes widely—the one (gazing) over the many.
    We proceed according to his commandments and yours [=Ādityas'].
17. We follow the ancient accustomed ways of the one [=the Sun] associated with the sovereign kings [=Ādityas],
    the long-heard commandments of Mitra and of Varuṇa.
18. He who measured on every side the ends of heaven and of earth with his ray,
    he filled both world-halves with his greatness.

19. This Sun held up his light under the shelter of heaven,
    blazing like fire when it has been kindled and bepoured.
20. The speech at (the place) providing a long seat [=ritual ground] gains control over a prize rich in cattle;
    it gains control over non-poisonous food for giving.
21. I speak this to the Sun and to both world-halves, at evening and at dawn:
    "Always rise up to us among our benefactors."

22. A silvery (horse) at Ukṣaṇyāyana's (sacrifice), a silver one at Harayāṇa's,
    and a yoked chariot at Suṣāman's—these have we gained.

23. These two are overflowing with (bounties) of horses, with fallow bays, for me;
    and the two (horses) that carry men (are overflowing) with those that get results.
24. With my newest inspired thought I have gained two altogether, along with their reins and with their whips,
    two chargers great at the winning of prizes.

VIII.26 (646) Aśvins (1–19), Vāyu (20–25)

Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva or Vyaśva Āṅgirasa
25 verses: uṣṇih, except gāyatrī 16–19, 21, 25 and anuṣṭubh 20, arranged in tṛcas, with an extra verse, 19, at the end of the Aśvin sequence

A long and rather repetitive hymn. The first nineteen verses are dedicated to the Aśvins and, as usual, urge them to drive their chariot to our sacrifice and to give us goods in return. There is little novel to capture the audience; the most striking image is found in verse 13: the unnamed god Agni, dressed in sacrifices like a bride in her wedding finery.

The final six verses belong to Vāyu, deified Wind, another god associated with the early-morning sacrifice, who receives the first soma drink there. He too is called to make the journey to our sacrifice and reward us for our offerings. He is twice (vss. 21, 22) designated as the son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar, the fashioner god—a somewhat surprising identification, given the tangled marital situation of Tvaṣṭar's daughter as tantalizingly sketched in X.17.1–2—where Vāyu is not in the picture.

1. I call your chariot for joint praise among our patrons,
   o you of invincible skill, you bulls who bring bullish goods.
2. O Nāsatyas, to Varo Suṣāman for his great extension
   do you drive with your help, you bulls who bring bullish goods.
3. We call you today with our oblations, you who bring prizewinning mares as goods,
   as you become refreshed on the many refreshments beyond the nights.

4. Let your famed chariot, the best conveyor, drive here, o Aśvins, superior men.
   (Then) you shall look closely at the praise songs of the powerful one for splendor.
5. Even as you follow your meandering course, you should turn your mind here, o Aśvins, who bring bullish goods,
   for (then) you two, o Rudras, shall deliver (us) beyond hatreds.
6. For you two wondrous ones fly around the whole (world) in proper sequence with your prompt (horses),
   as those who quicken our insight, as the honey-colored lords of beauty.

7. Drive right up to us, o Aśvins, together with all-prospering wealth,
as unbudgeable bounteous ones, bringing good heroes.
8. You two—come here to receive this (offering) of mine, Indra and Nāsatyas—
as two gods joined in greatest delight with the gods today.
9. Because we call upon you, (we) seeking bulls like Vyaśva seeking Ukṣan (his patron),
come here with your favors, o inspired poets.

10. Praise the Aśvins, o seer. Surely they will listen to your call
and burn up the niggards very nearby?
11. Listen to the son of Vyaśva, you two superior men, and you will know of this (offering) of mine,
as two of one accord, (you and) Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
12. O holy ones, out of what is given by you and what is brought by you,
do your best for me along with my patrons day after day, o bulls.

13. The one who is swathed in sacrifices for you, like a bride in her (wedding) dress—
serving (him [=Agni]), the Aśvins have made (him) to be beautiful—
14. (Agni,) who will watch over your (circuit) of broadest extent, protective of men.
Drive around your circuit, seeking us.
15. For us drive your circuit protective of men, you who bring bullish goods.
As if mounting (a chariot) facing many directions, you have conveyed the sacrifice with our hymn.

16. Our praise song, best of calls at conveying, calls you as our messenger, o men.
Let it be for you, o Aśvins.
17. Whether you find exhilaration yonder in the flood of heaven or in the house of refreshment,
listen just to me, immortal ones.
18. And this one, driving brightly, best of rivers at conveying,
the Sindhu River with her golden track—
19. Together with this good praise and bright insight
do you travel, o Aśvins driving beautifully.

20. Yoke the two that power the chariot; team up the two flourishing (horses), o good one.
After that, drink our honey, o Vāyu; come to our pressings.
21. O Vāyu, unerring lord of truth, son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar—yours
are the forms of help we choose.

22. The son-in-law of Tvaṣṭar, the lord of wealth, do we beseech for wealth—
as the people who provide the pressed soma (we beseech) Vāyu for brilliant things.

23. Kindly Vāyu, journey here from heaven. Drive your good horse-flesh;
drive from great (heaven) the two broad-winged (horses) at the chariot.
24. For we call you to the seats of men (to be) the first to attain delight
(as we call) the horse-backed pressing stone—(call you) along with your munificence.
25. O god Vāyu, as the first to find exhilaration with your mind,
make prizes, waters, and insights for us.

The next group of hymns (27–31) is attributed to Manu Vaivasvata and consists of four hymns to the All Gods, followed by a very interesting praise of the Sacrificer and his Wife, the only direct mention of this latter figure in the Ṛgveda. On the group see Oldenberg (1888: 215).

VIII.27 (647) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
22 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn to the All Gods falls roughly into three parts on the basis of the gods addressed. The first eight verses contain a number of named gods, whose associations seem random, rather than ordered into the usual functional groups—with, for example, the Maruts mentioned next to the Ādityas, singly or jointly, or to Agni. In contrast to this jumble of divine names, the middle section (vss. 9–14) mentions no gods except Savitar (vs. 12), and he is in service of the unnamed plural "you" used of the gods as a corporate entity. The unity and superimposability of the various gods in this section is made clear in verses 13–14. The final section (vss. 15–22) mentions only the Ādityas, though in fact they appear only in verses 15, 17, and 22.

Despite these differences in divine address, the hymn is unified by its concerns, especially the desire for protection and shelter offered by the gods (see, e.g., vss. 4, 9, 20), and by its vocabulary—in particular the epithet *viśvá-vedas* "affording all possessions" (vss. 2, 4, 11, 19, 20, 21) or, according to others, "having all knowledge, which is a near phonological match to *víśve devā́ḥ* "All Gods," to whom the hymn is dedicated. The ritual context is also very much present in the hymn.

On the basis of verse 12 and the sketch of Savitar's functions there, Geldner suggests that this is an evening hymn. But later in the hymn the poet insistently mentions various times of day (vss. 19–21), and so it seems rather that he is seeking the aid and protection of the gods round-the-clock, as it were.

The language of the hymn is fairly simple and straightforward, and the lexicon often repetitive. But the effect is pleasing, and the poem hardly deserves Renou's judgment (*EVP* IV: 106) that it is "banal" and "facile."

1. Agni has been set in front while the solemn speech (is being recited), as have the pressing stones and the ritual grass while the ceremony (is going forth).
   With a verse I implore the Maruts, Brahmaṇaspati, and the gods for help worthy to be chosen.
2. Here I have sung the (sacrificial) animal, the earth, the trees, Dawn and Night, the plants.
   And do you all, good ones affording all possessions, become furtherers of our poetic insights.

3. Let our ceremony go forth first to Agni among the gods,
   forth to the Ādityas, to Varuṇa of firm commandments, to the all-radiant Maruts,
4. For they all, affording all possessions, caring for the stranger, will be there for Manu, to increase him.
   With invulnerable protectors, you who afford all possessions—hold out to us shelter that keeps the wolf away.

5. Come to us here today, all of like mind and like delight—
   o Maruts, goddess Aditi, great House-Goddess—at our verse and our song to our seat.
6. Dear are those equine (gifts) of yours and dear to you the oblations to which you drive, o Maruts and Mitra.
   Let Indra, Varuṇa, the powerful men [=Maruts?], (and?) the Ādityas sit on this ritual grass of ours.

7. We who have ritual grass twisted for you and pleasurable offerings set out in due order,
   who have soma pressed and the fire kindled, like Manu, invoke (you), o Varuṇa.
8. Drive forth hither, o Maruts, Viṣṇu, Aśvins, Pūṣan, by reason of the poetic insight belonging to me.
   Let Indra drive here first, with those desirous of gain—he who is sung as the Vṛtra-smashing bull.

9. O gods without deceit, hold out to us unbroken shelter,
   a defense that neither from afar, nor even from nearby will (anyone) venture against, o good ones.
10. For there exists for you a common birth (with us), you gods who care for the stranger; there exists friendship.
    Commend us for previous good faring; right away (re)commend (us) for newer favor.

11. Because just now (I have dispatched) a praise invocation to you, just now for the distribution of desirable goods—
to you who afford all possessions have I, doing homage, dispatched (it) like a lead(-cow).
12. O you of good guidance, for you has this Savitar, worthy to be chosen, stood up, erect.
Down have settled the busy two-footed and four-footed, and those that fly about.

13. Every god among you for help, every god for dominance,
every god for prizewinning would we invoke, singing with poetic insight (as our) goddess.
14. For the gods, all as one, are of like fervor for Manu, of like generosity.
Let them be for us now, let them be in the future for our progeny, the finders of a wide realm.

15. I recite to you, o you without deceit, at the concourse of praise invocations.
No injury (comes) to that mortal who has done honor to your ordinances, o Varuṇa, Mitra, (and Aryaman).
16. He furthers his dwelling place, ex(tends) his great refreshments, who does ritual service to your liking.
He is propagated through progeny forth from his foundation. Unharmed and whole, he thrives.

17. That one acquires without fighting; along (paths) easy to go on he travels his routes,
whom Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman protect—they of like generosity and like delight.
18. Even in the flat plain you make a niche for him; even in difficult going (you make for him) smooth flowing.
Also this missile—it is now far from him—let it go unfaltering to destruction.

19. Since today as the sun was rising you established truth, o you of dear dominion,
since at (sun)set, at awakening, or since at midday of the day, you affording all possessions,
20. Or since at evening, o lords, you held out shelter to the pious man who pursues truth,
so might we stay nearby you, you good ones affording all possessions, in your midst.

21. Since today when the sun rose, since at midday, since at the (time of) covering [=evening?],
you establish a thing of value for Manu the discerning oblator, o you affording all possessions,

22. We would choose this much-protecting (shelter) of yours, o sovereign kings, as a son would (his father's shelter).
    May we, pouring the oblation, reach that by which we shall reach a better (state), o Ādityas.

VIII.28 (648) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
5 verses: gāyatrī, except puraüṣṇih 4

A curious little fragment with no apparent unity, unlike the immediately following hymn. The common canonical number of gods, thirty-three, is mentioned in verse 1, and these undifferentiated gods are apparently our global protectors in verse 3 and able to attain all their desires in verse 4. Verse 2 mentions an oddly assorted set of gods: the three principal Ādityas, but also multiple Agnis, and two fairly marginal groups of divinities, the Wives of the Gods and the Gift Escorts. Though verse 2 names the divinities, in contrast to verses 1 and 3–4, it shares the ritual context of verse 1, which is lacking in the two following verses concerning the gods in general.

The final verse (5) is in the same riddling style as the following hymn (VIII.29), though in a different meter, and its vocabulary invites the identification of the "seven" as the Maruts (called thrice seven in I.133.6), especially since they are not found in the following hymn.

1. The gods, three beyond thirty, who sat down on the ritual grass,
   they found and once again they gained.
2. Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, the Agnis with the Gift Escorts,
   along with the Wives (of the Gods), are those to whom the *vaṣaṭ*-cry is made.
3. These are our herdsmen to the west, these to the north, these likewise to the south,
   to the east—through their whole clan.
4. As the gods desire, just so will it be. No one will confound this (desire) of theirs,
   not even a hostile mortal.
5. Of the seven there are seven spears; seven brilliancies are theirs;
   seven beauties did they put on.

VIII.29 (649) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata or Kaśyapa Mārīca
10 verses: dvipadā virāj (so Anukramaṇī), but really dvipadā satobr̥hatī

A very tightly and intricately structured riddle hymn. (See discussion in Jamison 2007: 75–77.) Each short verse (dvipāda satobr̥hatī verses contain only twenty syllables apiece) identifies a god (or pair of gods) by attributes or behavior, but not by name—though the referents would be clear to the audience. It is thus, in the first instance, a list hymn. However, the poet has devised a method to endow the list template with both internal structure and forward momentum. In second position of each of the verses is a numeral. In the first seven verses it is *ékaḥ* "one," but verses 8 and 9 have *dvā́* "two" and the last verse plural *éke* "some" or, literally, "the ones," so that the verse structure builds through the categories of grammatical number, culminating in the only plural—though since *éke* belongs to the same stem as *ékaḥ,* there is also a sense of symmetry and return.

There is further structure within the subsections of the hymn. The *éka* verses, the first seven in the hymn, show an omphalos structure, with the three middle verses (3–5) having the identical sequence . . . *éko bibharti háste* "the one bears in his hand." The poet plays with number in other ways in this hymn: verse 7, the final verse containing "one," begins *trī́ṇi ékaḥ* "three the one. . . . " The referent is Viṣṇu and his three strides, so the poet, by introducing a new number, prepares us for our departure from the singular. Similarly, the next verse, the first with "two," also contains "one": VIII.29.8a *víbhir dvā́ carata ékayā sahá* "With the birds the two wander along with the one" [=the two Aśvins plus Sūryā], with the feminine instrumental *ékayā* providing a transition between the "one" verses and the "two" verses.

If we are correct, the lone and climactic plural *éke* in verse 10 also has a different status from the apparently parallel numerals in the previous verses. As previously noted, each riddling verse defines a god, but in this last verse the identity of the *éke* is not entirely clear: the Aṅgirases or Atri(s) have been suggested (see Geldner's note ad loc.). I would suggest instead that this verse now turns to the world of men by presenting the poets' self-identification. The poets themselves (or their ancestors) are the solution to this final riddle. They draw attention to their own creative activity (or that of their ancestors), and as often in final verses they make a sort of meta-reference to the rest of the hymn that precedes this announcement: it is this same hymn that they are chanting now. At the same time the rigid poetic parallel structure implicitly claims for the mortal poets the same status as the gods they have just celebrated, since they are numerically identified in the same type of riddle as the gods of verses 1–9. In favor of the view that human poets/ritualists are the subject of verse 10 is the presence of the words *árcanta(ḥ). . . sā́ma* "chanting . . . melody." Joining these two words in the same clause seems intended to evoke the technical terms *ŕ̥c* "verse" (of the R̥gveda) and the *sā́man* "melody" (of the Sāmaveda) to which it is set, major components of Vedic ritual utterance, and therefore to mark the event depicted as a contemporary ritual of the present Vedic community. "Causing the sun to shine" may ascribe a cosmogonic act to the original performance of the ritual, or (more likely in our view) simply suggest that the hymns uttered at the daily dawn ritual actually ensure the rising and shining of the sun, rather than simply celebrating it.

Thus the poem skillfully combines and balances architectonic structures with forward, developing movement, and does so in a remarkably economical package. The development is not only formal, for the order in which the gods are presented takes us from the here-and-now of the ritual ground (Soma and Agni), through the mythical space where gods perform deeds that have effects on men (Tvaṣṭar, Indra, Rudra, Pūṣan), to the airy and heavenly spaces (Viṣṇu, Aśvins and Sūryā, Mitra and Varuṇa), ending specifically "in heaven" (*divi*). Yet, despite all this clever machinery, the hymn wears its structure lightly, and the mechanisms that provide so much pleasure are essentially invisible to the audience.

1. Brown, this one is changeable, a spirited youth; he smears golden unguent on himself. [=Soma]
2. In the womb this one has sat down flashing, the wise one among the gods. [=Agni]
3. An axe this one bears in his hand—a metal one—he firmly founded among the gods. [=Tvaṣṭar]
4. A mace this one bears in his hand, set there; with it he keeps smashing obstacles. [=Indra]
5. A sharp thing this one bears in his hand, a weapon—he blazing, strong, with healing [?] remedies. [=Rudra]
6. The paths this one swells; like a thief he knows of hidden treasures. [=Pūṣan]
7. Three (strides) this one, wide-going, has stridden, to where the gods become exhilarated. [=Viṣṇu]
8. With the birds these two wander, along with the one (woman). They go abroad like exiles. [=Aśvins and Sūryā]
9. A seat these two made for themselves, the two highest in heaven, sovereign kings, whose potion is melted butter. [=Mitra and Varuṇa]
10. Chanting, these ones thought up a great melody. With it they caused the sun to shine. [=human poets]

VIII.30 (650) All Gods

Manu Vaivasvata
4 verses: gāyatrī 1, puraüṣṇih 2, bṛhatī 3, anuṣṭubh 4

The final hymn in this Viśve Devāḥ series consists of four verses in four different meters, though since they are all different combinations involving eight- and twelve-syllable pādas, the difference in meters is not jarring. Much more jarring—and, in our opinion, deliberately so—is the contrast between the slangy and popular register in verse 1 and the solemn, almost stilted rhetoric of the second verse, which explicitly represents itself as quoting the first one. The remaining two verses express conventional prayers for aid and protection, in much the same style as verse 2.

1. "Since there isn't a little runt among you, gods, nor a little kid,
   (you are) all just entirely great."
2. Thus shall you be praised, you who care for the stranger, who are the three and thirty,
   you gods who deserve the sacrifice of Manu.
3. Protect us; help us; speak on our behalf.
   Do not lead us far away from the path of the fathers, of the sons of Manu, into the distance.
4. O gods, all of you who are here and belonging to all men—
   to us hold out extensive shelter, and to our cattle and horse.

VIII.31 (651) Yajamāna + Patnī [Praise of Offering and Laud of the Sacrificer 1–4; Household 5–9; Blessings for the Household Pair 10–18]

Manu Vaivasvata
18 verses: gāyatrī 1–8, 10–13; anuṣṭubh 9, 14; paṅkti 15–18

This last hymn of the small Manu Vaivasvata collection shows its composite nature by its length, its mixture of meters, and, especially, by its themes. The first nine verses contain two parallel treatments of the same subject; verses 10–14 seem unconnected both with what precedes and what follows, and resemble some of the disordered All God sequences in earlier Manu Vaivasvata hymns (VIII.27.1–8 and VIII.28) in calling on an odd assortment of gods for protection; the final four verses (15–18) return to the topic of the beginning of the hymn, the benefits accruing to the punctilious sacrificer, though in rather general terms.

The beginning of the hymn, especially verses 5–9, are of extraordinary ritual interest, for they contain the only clear reference to the participation of the Sacrificer's Wife in R̥gvedic ritual—participation which is, in our view, a ritual innovation in the late R̥gveda. (For indirect references to her presence in R̥gvedic ritual, see Jamison 2011 and forthcoming a and b, and discussion ad VIII.33.) As the Anukramaṇī states, verses 5–9 are dedicated to the "household pair" (*dámpatī*), who are depicted as jointly participating in soma preparation (vs. 5). Their rewards are great and appropriately domestic (see esp. vs. 8). Indeed, the mention of the "milk-mixture" (*āśír*, vs. 5) makes it quite likely that the ritual depicted is the Third Pressing, itself likely a ritual innovation, found only among certain R̥gvedic clans, the pressing in which the participation of the Sacrificer's Wife is particularly prominent in later śrauta ritual (see Jamison 1996a: 126–46). The first four verses of the hymn mention only the Sacrificer, with no mention of the Wife, but a reference to the milk-mixture in verse 2 and to the benefits to his house (vs. 4) makes it likely that these four verses treat the same topic, though without the radical overt mention of the Wife.

The Anukramaṇī considers the final four verses (15–18) to be blessings for the same household pair (*dampatyor āśiṣaḥ*), but again there is no overt mention of the Wife, and, in contrast to verses 1–4 with its reference to the milk-mixture, the ritual that the successful sacrificer performed is left unclear.

1. Whoever will sacrifice for another and will also sacrifice for himself,
   who will press (soma) and will cook (the oblation),
   just that formulator will find pleasure of Indra.
2. Whoever will give the offering cake to him and the soma with its milk-mixture,
   able (Indra) will protect just him from difficult straits.
3. His chariot will be brilliant; god-sped, he will swell up,
   winning all (the things) of the enemy.
4. In his house inexhaustible Refreshment, possessed of offspring
   and milk-cows, gives milk day after day.
5. The household couple who with one mind press and rinse (the soma)
   with its own proper milk-mixture, o gods,
6. Those two go up against the puffed-up (rival pressers?); united they attain to the ritual grass.
   They do not fade out when prizes (are at stake).
7. Those two do not spurn the favor of the gods, nor seek to conceal it;
   they seek to win lofty fame.
8. Possessing sons, possessing children they attain a complete lifespan,
   both decorated with gold.
9. The two whose oblations are worth pursuing, divvying up goods, doing honor, for the sake of immortality,
   they slam together the hairy udder; they perform friendly service to the gods.

10. We would choose the shelter of the mountains, of the rivers,
    of Viṣṇu, who stays by.
11. Let Pūṣan come here, let Wealth, let Fortune, best establishing well-being and whole(ness),
    a broad road toward well-being.
12. (Let) Aramati [/Devotion] (come), (let) every unassailing one with the mind of a god,
    the faultless (gift?) of the Ādityas.
13. Just as Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa are our protectors, (so) are the paths of truth, which are easy to travel.
14. Agni, the foremost god of the good ones do I invoke for you all with a hymn—
    (I and you all) serving him, dear to many, like an ally who brings success to the cultivated lands.

15. Quick is the chariot of the one with god on his side, or a champion in battles of every sort.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
16. You suffer no harm, o sacrificer, nor do you, o presser, nor you, o seeker of the gods.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
17. Because of his (ritual) work no one can catch up to him, nor send him away, nor keep him away.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.
18. There will be (a mass) of good heroes here and also (a mass) of swift horses.
    – Just he who, as sacrificer, seeks to attain the mind of the gods will surpass non-sacrificers.

Hymns 32–34 form a small collection, with all three hymns devoted to Indra, and frequently mentioning the Kaṇvas internally (and attributed by the Anukramaṇī to three different Kāṇva poets). See Oldenberg (1888: 215).

VIII.32 (652) Indra

Medhātithi Kāṇva
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged for the most part in tṛ̥cas

The hymn begins with a call to the Kaṇva poets to praise Indra's great deeds, and the next two verses (2–3) provide a quick catalogue of Indra's victories over several of his lesser known opponents. This theme, with some of the same names/epithets, returns at the end of the hymn (esp. vss. 25–27). In between we find the usual twin exhortations to Indra—to come to our soma sacrifice (rather than that of others; see esp. vss. 21–22) and to give us wealth and aid. The reciprocal obligation of the sacrificers and the recipient of sacrifice is nicely expressed in verse 16, where Indra's debt to (other) sacrificers has been discharged by his countergift.

There is nothing of particular note in this hymn, though it is nicely executed. It also contains several hapaxes and words with apparently non-Indo-Aryan phonology, especially toward the beginning, that give it a slightly exotic air.

The internal structure of the hymn is not entirely clear. We follow Oldenberg's analysis, whereby the hymn consists of tṛ̥cas plus a final verse (30) save for verses 19–20, which form an incomplete tṛ̥ca with perhaps a verse missing. However, the tṛ̥cas thus identified show little internal unity.

1. O Kaṇvas, with a song proclaim (the deeds) of Indra of the silvery drink
   done in the exhilaration of soma,
2. Who smashed Sr̥binda (so he became) harmless, smashed Pipru the Dāsa puffed up like a snake [/Ahīśuva]—
   he the strong one letting flow the waters.
3. Undermine the topside of Arbuda, the height of the lofty one.
   You have done this manly deed, Indra.

4. To the famed one (bring) your (soma) boldly, like a torrent [?] from the mountain.
   I invoke him of good lips for help.
5. Having become exhilarated, you will split apart the enclosure of the cow, of the horse
   like a stronghold for your comrades in soma, o champion.
6. If you will take pleasure in my pressed (soma) or you will find delight in my solemn speech,
   from afar come near through your own power.

7. We praisers abide in you, o Indra with your longing for hymns.
   You drinker of the soma—quicken us.
8. And bring us food, granting it inexhaustible—
   many are your goods, liberal one—
9. And make us possessed of cows, of gold, of horses.
   Might we be clasped by refreshments.

10. We invoke him of stammering speech, of stout forearms, for help;
    (we invoke) him who creates success, for aid.
11. Who as "hundred-intentioned one" then carries them out in the concourse as Vr̥tra-smasher,
    while providing many goods for the singers,
12. He as "able one" will be able for us, he who has gifts and brings them near—
    Indra, with all his help.

13. He who is the great streambed of wealth, easy to cross, the partner of the presser—sing to that Indra,
14. The guider, the very steadfast one who wins fame in battles,
    lord over much by his strength.
15. No one can restrain his powers, his liberalities;
    no one can say, "he does not give."

16. There exists no debt to the formulators, nor to the puffed-up pressers now:

no soma has been drunk without a counter(gift).

17. Sing just to the admirable one, to the admirable one recite
 solemn words;
 perform sacred formulations just for the admirable one.
18. The admirable one will tear out hundreds, thousands (of goods)—he
 the unobstructable prizewinner,
 Indra, who is the strengthener of him who offers sacrifice.

19. Wander widely following your own power, following the invocations of
 the communities.
 Indra, drink of the pressings.
20. Drink of (the pressings) that have their own milk-cows, both (the
 pressing) at the son of Tugra's [=Bhujyu]
 and this one right here, which is yours, Indra.

21. Pass over him who presses with rage, the one who has pressed
 in violation.
 This one here—drink this pressed gift.
22. Pass through the three distant realms; pass over the five peoples,
 keeping watch over the nourishing streams, o Indra.
23. Like the sun its ray, let loose your rein. Let my hymns guide
 you here
 like waters, converging, to the deep.

24. Adhvaryu! Pour out the soma for the belipped hero.
 Bring of the pressing (for him) to drink.
25. Who split the bolt of the water and released the rivers
 downward,
 who fixed the cooked (milk) fast in the cows,
26. He who is equal to song smashed Vr̥tra, (smashed) the spider's son
 [/Aurṇavābha] and the one puffed up like a
 snake [/Ahīśuva].
 With snow [/an icicle?] he pierced Arbuda.

27. To the strong one who lays low, the invincible victor,
 sing your god-given formulation—
28. Who in the exhilaration of the soma stalk
 oversees all commandments among the gods—Indra.
29. Hither let these two feasting companions, the pair of fallow bays with
 golden manes,
 convey (you) to the pleasure set out (for you).

30. The fallow bays, praised by Priyamedha, will convey you near,
 much praised one, for soma-drinking.

VIII.33 (653) Indra

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
19 verses: br̥hatī arranged in tr̥cas 1–15, gāyatrī 16–18, anuṣṭubh 19

For most of its length (through vs. 15), this is an unremarkable hymn to Indra, with the usual invitations to him to attend our soma sacrifice along with praise of his overwhelming strength and requests for his bounty. Indra's "resolve" (*-krátu*) is frequently mentioned (vss. 5, 6, 11, 13, 14).

The last four verses (16–19), in a different meter, are also entirely different in tone and intent and have given rise to multiple interpretations—especially the final taunt (19d): "You, a brahmin, have become a woman." Our view of this tantalizingly opaque sequence is that it concerns the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife into the performance of solemn ritual, an introduction celebrated in the nearby hymn VIII.31 (see remarks there). But, unlike the situation in VIII.31, the poet of VIII.33 displays a conservative opposition to this ritual innovation, an innovation that he nonetheless ascribes to Indra's leadership. In verse 16 the poet complains that an unnamed ritualist no longer listens to the instructions of his fellow ritualists but only to Indra's. In verses 17 and 18 Indra speaks, and though he at first disparages women's intellect (vs. 17), he asserts that a sacrifice directed by a complementary pair (*mithunā́,* a word often used explicitly of a sexual couple) is especially successful (with implicit contrast to the older model without female participation)—while at the same time suggesting that the husband should keep the upper hand (or upper chariot-pole: the common metaphor of sacrifice as chariot is in play). The final verse is, in our view, spoken by the jaundiced poet himself. In the first three pādas he mocks his ritually innovative colleague by pretending to be a mother inculcating proper feminine behavior into her little daughter. The language is both slangy and heavily diminutivized, and the crucial noun in pāda c, the dual *kaśaplakaú,* is a hapax and unclear, though it may well refer to female genitalia. He then announces his reasons for this mockery: the innovative colleague, by favoring women's ritual participation, risks being tainted by the female presence and becoming a woman himself. (Such charges have frequently been directed at men who favor women's rights, at least since the time of John Stuart Mill.) For more detailed discussion, see Jamison (forthcoming a and 2011).

It is not entirely clear why this curious sequence is found tacked onto an otherwise ordinary Indra hymn. It occupies the position often taken by a dānastuti, and of course dānastutis often display a linguistic register similar to what is found here, slangy and colloquial vocabulary, syntactically informal direct speech, and sexual innuendo. It has been suggested that it is a sort of anti-dānastuti, a "satire" in the technical sense. This is an appealing explanation for its position in the hymn, but with the proviso that, at least in our interpretation, the target of the satire is clearly not the poet's patron (stingy or not), but a fellow ritualist.

1. We who are provided with pressings, with the twisted ritual grass,
   like waters

at the outpourings of the strainer, take our seats around you,
Vṛtra-smasher, as praisers.

2. The men provided with hymns cry out to you exclusively when (soma) is pressed, o good one.
When will you come thirsting here to our house, to our pressed (soma), Indra, like a buffalo following its own track?

3. With the Kaṇvas, bold one, you will boldly tear out a prize worth a thousand.
We beg for a tawny-formed (prize) consisting of cattle—right away, o unbounded bounteous one.

4. "Drink!"—sing (thus) to Indra, at the exhilaration of the stalk, o Medhyātithi,
to the mace-wielder, who is linked with the two fallow bays, who, when (soma) is pressed, is a golden chariot,

5. Who has a good left (horse) and a good right one, the strong one, who is hymned as the one of good resolve,
who distributes thousands, who has a hundred bounties, Indra, who is acknowledged as the stronghold-splitter,

6. Who is audacious, who is unobstructable, who is embedded within his beard,
possessing extensive brilliance, rouser, much praised, in his resolve strong like an ox.

7. Who recognizes him when he drinks when (the soma) is pressed? What vigor has he assumed?
This is the one who splits strongholds with strength, the belipped one getting exhilarated from the stalk.

8. Like a wild elephant he has established his wandering [=his territory] in many places, through his giving.
No one will restrain you; you will come here to the pressed (soma); great, you wander about in your strength.

9. Though being strong, unprostratable, steadfast, perfected for battle,
if the bounteous one will hear the call of a praiser, Indra will not stay away. He will come here.

10. This is truly so: you alone are the bull for us, with the speed of a bull, unobstructable—
for as a bull, strong one, you are famed in the distance, as a bull famed nearby.

11. Bullish are your reins, bullish your golden whip;
bullish is your chariot, bounteous one, bullish your two fallow bays; a bull are you of a hundred resolves.

12. Let the bullish presser press for you; o bull, flying straight—bring (prizes) here.

The bull has run to the bull in the waters. It [=soma] is for you, o mounter of the fallow bays.

13. Drive here, most powerful Indra, to drink the somian honey;
as bounteous one, (drive) on your own to the landing site. He of good resolve will listen to the songs, the sacred formulations, and the hymns.
14. You who bestride the chariot—let the fallow bays, yoked to the chariot, convey you hither,
even across what belongs to the stranger, across the pressings that belong to others, you Vṛtra-smasher of a hundred resolves.
15. Set our praise today nearest to yourself, you greatly great one;
let our pressings be most availing to you for exhilaration, you heaven-ruling soma-drinker.

16. [Poet:] He finds no pleasure in the instruction of you or me, (but only in that) of the other one [=Indra],
the hero who led us hither.
17. Indra said just this, "the mind of woman is not to be instructed,
and her will is fickle.
18. [Indra, cont'd:] "(Nonetheless,) it's the twin span, the complementary pair [/married couple], aroused to exuberance, that draws the chariot [=sacrifice];
but even so the chariot-pole of the bull [=husband] is higher."
19. [Poet:] " 'Keep your eyes to yourself: look below, not above. Bring your two little feet closer together:
don't let them see your two little "lips" [?].' For you, a brahmin, have turned into a woman!"

VIII.34 (654) Indra

Nīpātithi Kāṇva (1–15), the thousand ṛṣis of Vasurocis Āṅgirasa (16–18)
18 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–15, gāyatrī 16–18, arranged in tṛcas

The first fifteen verses of this hymn show a rigid formal structure that is awkward to convey in translation. The second half of each verse consists of a refrain, which implicitly contrasts with the first half of each verse. The refrain addresses an unidentified plural "you," who have driven to heaven and command heaven; we consider the "you" to refer to the other gods, as contrasted with Indra, or perhaps specifically to the Maruts. Most of the first half-verses begin with the preverb *ā́* "here" and generally call upon Indra to drive here (using the same verb as in the refrain) and participate in the sacrifice. Thus Indra's desired presence "here" is the constant counterweight to the removal of the other gods to heaven.

The other part of the refrain is a curious vocative, clearly addressed to Indra, *divā-vasu* "you who (bring) goods by day," found only here and of odd formation. The motivation for this form becomes clear in the dānastuti (vss. 16–18), where the patron's name is given as Vasu-rocis (vs. 16) "whose light is goods": Indra's epithet *divā-vasu* is a pun on and a metathesis of this name, with the *vásu* "goods" element reversed and *rocís* "light" replaced by *dívā* "by day." The similarity between this name and the relentlessly repeated epithet of Indra establishes an implicit identification between the human patron and Indra; even more strikingly, verse 16 asserts that the poet and the god Indra have jointly received rich goods from Vasurocis, so that even Indra is presented as a beneficiary of the largesse of Vasurocis.

The formal structure of the hymn continues to its very end: the final word of the hymn is the signature *ā́* "here," which also began it.

1. Here—Indra, drive here with your fallow bays, up to the lovely praise of Kaṇva,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
2. Here—let the soma-possessing pressing stone as it speaks hold you here with its cry,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
3. In this place their felly shakes itself, as a wolf does a lamb,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

4. Here—the Kaṇvas call you here for help, for prizewinning,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
5. I set out the first drinking of the pressings for you, as if for a bull,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
6. Along with Plenitude come here to us, as one whose vision is everywhere, for our help,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

7. Here—drive here to us, you of great thought, of a thousand forms of help, a hundred bounties,
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
8. Here will the Hotar convey you—he installed by Manu, to be invoked among the gods [=Agni],
   o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

9. Here will the pair of fallow bays, aroused to exuberance, convey you, as its two wings convey a falcon,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

10. Here—drive here, away from the stranger—hail!—to drink of the soma,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
11. Here—drive here to us to listen; take pleasure in the hymns here,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
12. Come here to us with your fully equipped (horses) of like form, o you who possess fully equipped horses,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

13. Here—drive here from the mountains, from the surface of the sea,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
14. Here—keep breaking out for us bovine and equine (wealth) in thousands, o champion,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.
15. Here—bring (it) here to us in thousands, bring ten thousands and hundreds,
o you who bring goods by day—(though) you (other gods), who impose order over yonder heaven, have driven off to heaven.

16. Here—when Indra and I took from Vasurocis [/him whose light is goods]
a thousand strongest equine livestock,
17. The silvery ones whose speed is the wind's, the reddish ones, quick-streaming,
which shine like suns,
18. Amid the gifts of Pārāvata [/the one from afar (=Indra?)], amid the swift (chariots) with speeding wheels,
I mounted on the middle of the wood(en chariot?) here.

The next four hymns (VIII.35–38) are attributed to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, whose Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V (52–61) is one of the glories of that dazzling book, and who is also the composer of a single hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala (IX.32).

VIII.35 (655) Aśvins

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
24 verses: pariṣṭājjyotis, except paṅkti 22, 24 and mahābṛhatī 24, arranged in tṛcas.

The Anukramaṇī's attribution of this hymn to Śyāvāśva is supported by his self-reference in verses 19–21 and his reference to his ancestor Atri in verse 19, but the virtuosity so characteristic of Śyāvāśva's Marut hymns in Maṇḍala V is not on display here. This long hymn may be one of the most repetitive in the Ṛgveda. In the first twenty-one verses the c-pāda is identical, and the tṛcas making up the hymn all have refrains encompassing at least the second half-verse (pādas cd: vss. 1–3; pādas cde: vss. 22–24) and usually the second (b) pāda as well (bcd: vss. 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–15, 16–18, 19–21). This leaves the first (a) pāda as the only locus of variation in each tṛca, and even that variation is patterned and under strict control. Moreover, the contents and phraseology of the individual tṛcas do not differ significantly one from another—urging the Aśvins to come to the sacrifice with numerous other gods and to partake of our offerings while providing us with gifts and aid in return. The repetitive structure has an incantatory effect, but it does not challenge the decoding skills of the audience.

The most interesting tṛca consists of verses 16–18. As a number of others have pointed out, these three verses, asking the Aśvins to "quicken" or "animate" various things for us, are appropriate to the three varṇas in turn: verse 16 to the brahmin, 17 to the kṣatriya, and 18 to the vaiśya. In fact, verse 16 begins with the word *bráhma*, while 17 begins with *kṣatrám*. In 16 we ask for the Aśvins' aid for ritual and priestly elements, in 17 for elements related to kingly and martial power, and in 18 for our livestock and people. As is well known, the varṇa system is not a prominent feature of the Ṛgveda and may well only be taking shape in this period, but this small collection of Śyāvāśva hymns displays it clearly—not only in this tṛca, but in the next two twinned hymns (36 and 37) with their reference to *bráhman* and *kṣatrá* respectively.

1. With Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, and Viṣṇu, with the Ādityas, the Rudras, and the Vasus,
   in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.
2. With all insights and (all) creation, o prizewinners, in comradeship with Heaven and Earth and the stones,
   in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.
3. With all the gods, three times eleven, here in comradeship with the Waters, the Maruts, and the Bhṛgus,
   in concert with Dawn and the Sun, drink the soma, o Aśvins.

4. Enjoy the sacrifice; take heed of my call. – Come down here to all our pressings, o gods.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.
5. Enjoy the praise song, like youths a maiden. – Come down here to all our pressings, o gods.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.

6. Enjoy the hymns; enjoy the rite. – Come down here to all our pressings, o gods.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, convey refreshment to us, o Aśvins.

7. Like *hāridrava*-birds (to the woods), you fly right to the wooden (cups). – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.
8. Like geese you fly, like travelers on the road. – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.
9. Like falcons you fly to the distribution of oblations. – Like buffaloes (to water), you come down to the pressed soma.
   In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive your circuit three times, o Aśvins.

10. Drink and satisfy yourself and come here. – Provide progeny and provide property.
    In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, Aśvins.
11. Conquer and sing praise and offer help. – Provide progeny and provide property.
    In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, o Aśvins.
12. Smite rivals and arrange allies in their place. – Provide progeny and provide property.
    In concert with Dawn and the Sun, provide nourishment for us, o Aśvins.

13. Accompanied by Mitra and Varuṇa and accompanied by their statute, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
    – In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.
14. Accompanied by the Aṅgirases and accompanied by Viṣṇu, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
    – In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.
15. Accompanied by the Ṛbhus, o bulls, accompanied by prizes, accompanied by the Maruts you go to the singer's call.
    – In concert with Dawn and the Sun, drive with the Ādityas, o Aśvins.

16. Quicken our sacred formulation and quicken our insights. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
    In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.

17. Quicken our lordly power and quicken our men. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.
18. Quicken our cows and quicken our clans. – Smite demons; keep away diseases.
In concert with Dawn and the Sun, (drink) the soma of the presser, o Aśvins.

19. As if to Atri's, listen to the first praise hymn of the presser Śyāvāśva, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.
20. Like gushes (of water), send gushing the good praise hymns of the presser Śyāvāśva, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.
21. Control the rites of the presser Śyāvāśva like reins, o you roused to exuberance.
– In concert with Dawn and the Sun, o Aśvins, (drink) the (soma) aged overnight.

22. Stop your chariot nearby. Drink the somian honey.
– Drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.
23. When the speech of reverence is set forth and the rite set forth, o men, in order to drink of the strengthening (soma),
drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.
24. Satiate yourselves on the pressed plant prepared with the *svāhā*-call, o gods.
– Drive here, o Aśvins; come here. Seeking help, I call to you: provide riches for the pious man.

VIII.36 (656) Indra

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
7 verses: śakvarī, except mahāpaṅkti 7

Despite the length and elaboration of the meter—a śakvarī verse consists of fifty-six syllables arranged in at least six pādas (for Oldenberg seven)—most of each of the first six verses in this hymn consists of refrain; only the first pāda, of twelve

syllables, varies in each verse. This structure is almost identical to that of the preceding hymn (VIII.35).

This hymn and the following one, VIII.37, although in different (but related) meters, are twinned conceptions. Both are seven verses long; both devote most of the first six verses to refrain, reserving only the first pāda of each verse for new material. The final verses of both hymns are almost identical save for a few lexical variants, the most important of which is the correspondence between *bráhmāṇi* "priestly formulations" in VIII.36.7 and *kṣatrā́ṇi* "lordly powers" in VIII.37.7. This correspondence suggests that the hymns were designed as appropriate to brahmins and kṣatriyas respectively, and though the formalized doctrine of the three twice-born varṇas seems to be taking shape only in the late R̥gveda (see especially the Puruṣasūkta, X.90.11–12), it is surely no accident, as Oldenberg points out (*Noten* ad loc.), that this same group of Śyāvāśva hymns contains a tripartite blessing clearly referring to the three upper varṇas (VIII.35.16–18). Nonetheless in this hymn there seems little that is specifically applicable to the brahmin and only to him, and indeed the strong emphasis on victory in the refrain would seem more a warrior than a priestly preoccupation.

Since Śyāvāśva is best known for his Marut cycle in the Vth Maṇḍala (V.52–61), it is entirely appropriate that Indra is "accompanied by the Maruts" in this refrain. Śyāvāśva's ancestors the Atris (note his patronymic Ātreya) are also glorified in this hymn (vss. 6–7); the Atris are, of course, more at home in their own family maṇḍala, V, than in VIII.

1. You are the helper of the one who presses (soma) and twists the ritual grass.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
2. Help the praiser further, bounteous one; help yourself.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
3. With nourishment you help the gods, with strength you help yourself.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.

4. Begetter of heaven, begetter of earth—
   – o you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
5. Begetter of horses, begetter of cows are you.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
6. Make the praise of the Atris great, o you of the (pressing) stone.
   – O you of a hundred resolves, for exhilaration drink the soma that they fixed as your portion—
   you winning all battles, (winning) the broad expanse, entirely victorious amid the waters, accompanied by the Maruts, o Indra, master of settlements.
7. Listen to Śyāvāśva as he presses (soma), just as you listened to Atri as he performed (ritual) acts.
   Alone, you helped Trasadasyu in the conquering of men, Indra, strengthening the priestly formulations.

VIII.37 (657) Indra

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
7 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except atijagatī 1

For the relationship between this hymn and its twin, VIII.36, see the introduction to the previous hymn. As discussed there, the final verse (7) of this hymn with its reference to *kṣatrā́ṇi* "lordly powers" (as opposed to the "priestly formulations" of VIII.36.7) puts the hymn in the domain of the kṣatriya varṇa. Unlike the previous hymn, where the brahmanical aspect is muted at best, this hymn does present a kingly and martial profile in the variant material in the first pādas of verses 2–6.

1. You furthered this priestly formulation at the overcoming of obstacles, furthered (the formulation) of the presser—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vr̥tra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
2. Winning battles against deceits, strong one—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vr̥tra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.

3. As lone king do you rule over this creation—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
4. You, just alone, keep apart the two (hosts) in confrontation—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
5. Over both peace and hitching up (for war) you are master—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
6. You help one to lordly power, you did not help another—
   – you lord of power, Indra, with all help—at the Midday Pressing, irreproachable Vṛtra-smasher, drink of the soma, possessor of the mace.
7. Listen to Śyāvāśva as he "rasps," just as you listened to Atri as he performed (ritual) acts.
   Alone, you helped Trasadasyu in the conquering of men, Indra, strengthening the lordly powers.

VIII.38 (658) Indra and Agni

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This simple hymn is defined by its structure. Each of the three tṛcas has a different refrain, though each of the refrains begins with the vocative dual dvandva *índrāgnī* "o Indra and Agni." The final verse (10) breaks the pattern, though the same dvandva is found, pāda-initial, in the genitive. In content the hymn is entirely devoted to the soma sacrifice and the poet's invitation to the two gods to come and enjoy it. The poet names himself in verse 9 and summarizes his poetic activity in the past tense. Such a summary is ordinarily found in the absolute final verse of hymns, but here it is capped by the pattern-breaking verse 10.

As often in hymns dedicated jointly to these two gods, who share little in terms of activities and attributes, they are either described in general terms or with epithets related to one or the other—for example, in verse 1 it is technically only Agni who is a "regular offerer of sacrifice" (*ṛtvíj*), while Indra is more appropriately the victor in prize contests (*vā́jeṣu*) than Agni. The third term in that verse, *kármasu* "in acts/deeds," is ambiguous, however, since *kárman* is regularly used both of the types of heroic deeds associated with Indra and with ritual acts more commonly ascribed to Agni.

1. Because you two are regular offerers of the sacrifice, winners in
   prize-contests and in (cultic/heroic) acts,
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.
2. Streaming, driving on the same chariot, Vṛtra-smashing, invincible—
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.
3. Here is the exhilarating honey for you two—the men have milked it out
   with stones.
   – Indra and Agni, take note of this.

4. Enjoy this sacrifice to your liking, (enjoy) the pressed soma, you jointly
   praised ones.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.
5. Enjoy these pressings here, because of which you conveyed the
   oblations.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.
6. This "turn" of song enjoy, my lovely praise.
   – Indra and Agni, come here, men.

7. Along with the early-traveling gods come here, you two of noble goods,
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.
8. Listen to (soma-)pressing Śyāvāśva, (as you did) to the call of
   the Atris—
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.
9. Thus did I call upon you two for help, just as the wise ones called—
   – Indra and Agni, for soma-drinking.

10. Here do I choose the help of Indra and Agni in company with
    Sarasvatī,
    the two for whom the song is recited.

The following group of hymns, VIII.39–42, is attributed to Nābhāka Kāṇva, who names himself several times in VIII.40 and 41. The group is characterized by the slangy refrain that puns on his name, *nábhantām anyaké same* "let all the other squirts burst!" The poet is also partial to the mahāpaṅkti meter, found in VIII.39–41.

VIII.39 (659) Agni

Nābhāka Kāṇva
10 verses: mahāpaṅkti

Agni's role as messenger between heaven and earth and as mediator between gods and men is particularly emphasized in this hymn. And, in addition to his usual ritual role, his identity as poet is also mentioned several times (see esp. vss. 1, 7, 9). The hymn

contains an example of the well-known trope of "pouring prayers" (vs. 3), and in the middle of the hymn we find a pun on one of Agni's standard epithets Jāta-vedas, in verse 6 where it is said that he "knows" (*veda*) the "races" (*jātā́)* of gods and men.

The hymn in general has a benign tone and high discourse level, and so the flippantly bloodthirsty refrain rests oddly in it. Only in verse 2 does it fit the contents, and even there the linguistic register is quite distinct between the verse proper and the refrain.

The poet handles the six-pāda structure of the mahāpaṅkti flexibly. The last pāda of each verse is the Nabhāka refrain. Otherwise the first two pādas (ab) and the fourth and fifth (de) pādas each group together, while the third pāda (c) belongs sometimes with ab (generally in the first part of the hymn) and sometimes with de (toward the end, vss. 7–9).

1. Agni have I praised, worthy of verses, Agni to be worshiped with invocation. Let Agni anoint the gods for us,
   for the sage poet acts as messenger between both (cosmic) divisions [=heaven and earth].
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
2. O Agni, (set) down on their [=gods'] bodies a laud with our newer speech. (Put) down the hostilities of the hostile ones.
   Let all the hostilities of the stranger, the hindrances keep away from here.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
3. O Agni, prayers to you I pour like ghee into your mouth. Be the discerning one among the gods,
   for you are the foremost gracious messenger of Vivasvant.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
4. Every kind of vigor does Agni acquire, even as (soon as) he longs for it—his oblation is the nourishment of the good ones—
   he acquires luck and lifetime, acquires joy, for every invocation of the gods.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Agni shows brightly through his very mighty, bright (ritual) action. He is Hotar of each and every (clan).
   He is decked out with gift-cows, and he impels (them) to the (gift-) reception.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
6. Agni knows the races of the gods, Agni (those) of mortals: (this is his) secret name [=Jātavedas]. Agni is the giver of treasure.
   Agni opens the doors, when well bepoured with a newer (speech).
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
7. Agni is joined with goods among the gods, among the clans devoted to sacrifice.
   With delight he fosters the many poetic arts, as the earth (fosters) everything—the god devoted to sacrifice among the gods.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

8. Agni, who, belonging to the seven human (divisions), is fixed amid all the rivers—
   to him have we come—the one with three dwellings, the best smasher of Dasyus for Mandhātar, Agni foremost in the sacrifices.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Agni inhabits the three (cosmic) divisions with their three parts, as sage poet.
   He will sacrifice to the thrice eleven (gods) here and please them for us, as inspired poet and messenger, when he has been prepared.
   –Let all the other squirts burst!
10. You, foremost Agni, among the Āyus, among the gods, alone have control over goods for us.
    Around you do the swirling waters circle, which are their own bridges.
    – Let all the other squirts burst!

VIII.40 (660) Indra and Agni

Nābhāka Kāṇva
12 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except śakvarī 2 and triṣṭubh 12

Unlike many Indra and Agni hymns, in this one the two divinities achieve some measure of independence, with the more significant role falling to Indra, who is mentioned alone in several verses, in part or wholly (2, 5, 6, 9, 10). Much of the content is martial, appropriate to Indra, and also more appropriate to the Nābhāka refrain than any other of the Nābhāka hymns. The freeing and winning of the waters is celebrated several times (vss. 5, 8, 10/11). There are several paired verses: 4 and 5 where Nābhāka is mentioned by name, and 10/11, the first to Indra, the second, almost identical, to Agni. The hymn ends with a verse in a different meter, without the refrain, that summarizes the hymn that precedes, as is often the case.

1. O Indra and Agni, victorious ones—you two will give us wealth,
   by which we might become victorious over the strongholds, even the firm ones, in the combats,
   as Agni (is victorious) over the woods especially when there is wind.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
2. For we do not stick you two together in a hole. But we sacrifice to Indra especially as strongest man among men.
   He will come here to us sometime with his steed to win the prize; he will come here to win wisdom.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
3. For these two, Indra and Agni, preside amid battle-raids.
   You two, sage poets through your poetic skill, on being asked, realize the visionary thought for the one seeking your companionship, o men.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

4. Like Nabhāka recite to Indra and Agni with a worshipful song,
the two to whom this whole moving world belongs,
whose goods this heaven and the great earth bear in their lap.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Like Nabhāka, direct sacred formulations to Indra and Agni,
the two who opened up the flood with its seven (stream)beds, with its sloping banks—Indra, showing mastery through his strength.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
6. Hew (him) apart in the age-old way, like the tangle of a vine; weaken the strength of the Dāsa.
Might we then take a share in his goods, brought together by Indra.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
7. When these peoples here vie in invoking Indra and Agni with song at length,
with our men might we overcome those doing battle, might we win against those eager to win.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
8. The two bright ones [=sun and moon], who (come) down from heaven and will proceed upward every day,
(they do so) following the commandment of Indra and Agni; following the commandment of Indra and Agni the rivers go driving, those which the two [=Indra and Agni] freed from bondage.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Many are your distributions (of goods to us), Indra, and many our encomia to you, o son of impulsion, possessor of fallow bays—
(many) the infusions of goods of the hero [=Indra], (and many) our visionary thoughts, which now reach their goal.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
10. Hone him [=Indra] with well-twisted (hymns)—the turbulent one, the "real thing," worthy of verses.
And he who even now will split the "eggs" of Śuṣṇa with his strength, he will conquer the waters along with the sun.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
11. Hone him [=Agni] affording good ceremonies, the "real thing" really there at the proper season.
And he who even now is solemnly proclaimed (as the one) who will split the "eggs" of Śuṣṇa, he has conquered the waters along with the sun.
– Let all the other squirts burst!
12. Thus to Indra and Agni, in the manner of the ancestors, of Mandhātar, of Aṅgiras, a newer (speech) has just been spoken.
With tripartite shelter protect us; may we be lords of riches.

VIII.41 (661) Varuṇa

Nābhāka Kāṇva
10 verses: mahāpaṅkti

A mystical hymn dedicated to Varuṇa alone, celebrating the god as cosmogonic creator and shaper of the world—both spatially, by measuring out the primordial cosmic domains and holding down and apart the cosmic realms (esp. vss. 4, 10), and temporally, by regulating the nights and days (vss. 3, 10). The sun and moon as his deputies function at the intersection of the spatial and temporal (vs. 9). The god is also presented as holding both human and natural phenomena within his encompassing physical protection (vss. 1cd, 3ac, 4de, 7abc).

The hymn seems to have a loose omphalos structure. Verbal correspondences in verses 2/9 (especially the "seven") and 3/8 (*ní* √*dhā* "deposit" and feminine plurals) provide a weak ring (see also the "three" in vss. 3/9 and "embrace" [*pári* √*svaj*] and "envelop" [*pári* √*mr̥ś*] 3/7). And the two middle verses, 5–6, the omphalos proper, point to the hymn's cryptic message—the creative power of poetry and of the knowledge and control of words, especially names.

Varuṇa's later association with the waters is evident in several hints in the hymn: his closeness to the rivers in 2d, who are also his seven sisters in 2e and the seven over which he has control in 9e, and his identification as "a secret sea" in 8a. The waters may well be the referents of the unidentified feminine plurals in 7a and 8c.

Much remains unclear in this hymn, however, and we do not claim to have penetrated all its many mysteries. One of the most obvious, but perhaps least interesting, puzzles is the relevance of the jaunty and bloodthirsty Nābhāka refrain to the high-minded and solemn contents of the hymn.

1. Chant to this one for him to prevail—to Varuṇa, and to the Maruts, the very wise ones—
   (Varuṇa,) who guards the insights of the sons of Manu like the cows of a herd.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
2. (Chant to) him in the same way with a hymn, with the composed thoughts of our forefathers, and with the panegyrics of Nābhāka—
   (him,) who is nearby at the rising of the rivers, having seven sisters he is in the middle (of them).
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
3. He holds the nights in his embrace; by his magic art he deposited the ruddy (dawns). He (holds) everything in his embrace—the one lovely to see.
   Following his commandment, his trackers [=nights?] increased the three dawns.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

4. Who is the one who fastened the peaks down upon the earth—the one lovely to see—he was the measurer of the primordial place.
   That is the leadership of Varuṇa, for he is like an energetic herdsman.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Who is the upholder of the worlds, who knows the secret names of the ruddy (dawns), their hidden names,
   he is a poet who fosters the many poetic arts, as heaven does its (concrete) form [=sun].
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
6. In whom are fixed all poetic arts—(he is) like the nave in a wheel. Do honor to Trita [/the third one] with alacrity.
   Like oxen in a pen to be yoked together, they have yoked the horses for yoking.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
7. Who lies on these [fem. =the waters?] (like) a cloak, while enveloping all the created things of these [masc. =the gods?] and their domains—
   in Varuṇa's household, in front (of him), are all the gods, following his commandment.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
8. A secret sea, powerful, he mounts as if to heaven, when he has deposited the ritual formula in them [=waters?].
   He scattered the magic arts with his ray as his foot, as he mounted to the celestial vault.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
9. Whose two bright, wide-gazing ones [=sun and moon] preside over the three earths, and three times have filled the higher (seats)—
   steadfast is the seat of Varuṇa. He has control over the seven (rivers?).
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
10. Who made the bright (days) and black (nights) becloaked following his commandments, he measured out the primordial domain—
    he who with his prop held apart the two world-halves, as Aja (Ekapad) held up heaven.
    – Let all the other squirts burst!

VIII.42 (662) Varuṇa (1–3), the Aśvins (4–6)

Arcanānas or Nābhāka Kāṇva
6 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6

This last hymn of the Nābhāka series is actually two hymns, on the grounds both of meter and of subject matter, as Oldenberg clearly states (1888: 213 n. 2). The first three verses, in triṣṭubh, are dedicated to Varuṇa. They continue the solemn

tone and the cosmic focus of the previous hymn to Varuṇa (VIII.41), but with none of the complexities. The Aśvins are the target of the second three verses (4–6), in a simple invitation to soma-drinking. The Nābhāka refrain is found only in this second hymnlet.

1. He propped up heaven—the lord who possesses all possessions—he measured out the expanse of the earth;
   the sovereign king made all the living worlds his seat. All these are the commandments of Varuṇa.
2. Extol lofty Varuṇa thus: offer reverence to the insightful herdsman of the immortal.
   He will extend to us shelter providing threefold defense. Protect us in your lap, o Heaven and Earth.
3. Sharpen the will and skill of the man who puts his best into this insightful thought, o god Varuṇa.
   Might we board a boat that provides a good crossing, by which we might cross beyond all difficulties.

4. The pressing stones, inspired poets, have roused you two, o Aśvins, with their insightful thoughts,
   for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
5. Just as the inspired Atri kept calling to you two, Aśvins, with his hymns,
   for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!
6. In just this way have I called to you two for help, just as the wise have called,
   for you to drink the soma, o Nāsatyas.
   – Let all the other squirts burst!

As Oldenberg remarks (1888: 216), on the basis of agreements in lexicon, phraseology, and style it is likely that VIII.43–48 form a group, though they are not all attributed to the same poet.

VIII.43 (663) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
33 verses: gāyatrī, most likely arranged in tr̥cas

Though it is likely that this hymn is constructed of tr̥cas, there is little overt unity within the tr̥cas. On the surface the hymn is a pleasant but generally unremarkable praise of Agni. His ritual functions are showcased throughout, and toward the end the "we" of the poet and his fellow sacrificers invoke him more and more insistently

in this role. But earlier in the hymn there is some nice naturalistic description of fire and fires (vss. 3–10). In verses 14 and 16 the poet emphasizes the kinship between himself and Agni as poet.

Another thematic strain evident in the hymn and asserting itself more and more toward the end is the role of Agni as a unifying focus of various clans and settlements in the larger Ārya community. In several early verses multiple fires are kindled at once (vss. 4–5). In light of later parts of the hymn, these can be interpreted as the separate family or clan fires, which are later joined conceptually in the single fire to which all the separate groups give allegiance (see esp. vs. 18, also 27, 29). This single fire, found in multiple places but shared by all the clans, is invoked for help in combat in verse 21. Agni's competitive (vss. 20, 25), martial (vss. 21, 23, 26, 32), and ruling (vs. 24) aspects become more prominent in the second half of the hymn; the sacrificers clearly wish to harness these powers for the good of the whole community. Though not insistent, this theme is pervasive and provides a subtle unity to this superficially rambling thirty-three-verse composition.

1. For the inspired poet, the ritual adept, the indestructible sacrificer,
   for Agni—
   these hymns, these praises arise right here.
2. For you right here, yearning for it, o unbounded Jātavedas,
   o Agni, I generate a lovely praise hymn.
3. Like brilliants, certainly, are your sharp scintillations, Agni.
   With their teeth they snap at the woods.

4. The fallow bays with smoke as their beacon, sped by the wind up
   toward heaven,
   take up opposing positions—the fires.
5. These fires kindled here in opposing (places) have come to sight all
   at once,
   like the beacons of the dawns.
6. Black are the realms at the feet of Jātavedas on his advance,
   when Agni grows on the earth.

7. Making the plants his wellspring (of nourishment), snapping (at them),
   Agni does not become extinguished,
   as he comes once again to the tender ones.
8. Bending back and forth with his tongues, flickering here and there with
   his flame,
   Agni shines brightly in the woods.
9. In the waters is your seat, Agni. You grow through the plants.
   While (still) being in their womb, you are born again.

10. This flame of yours, Agni, when bepoured, blazes up from the ghee,
    kissing the offering spoons on the mouth.

11. To him whose food is oxen, whose food is barren cows, to the ritual adept with soma on his back—
    to Agni we would do honor with praises.
12. And you, o Hotar whose resolve is worthy to be chosen, with homage
    and with kindling sticks do we beseech, o Agni.

13. And you, o Agni blazing when bepoured, like Bhr̥gu, like Manu,
    like Aṅgiras, do we invoke.
14. For you—o Fire by fire, a poet by a poet, the real (thing) by a real (man),
    a comrade by a comrade—are kindled.
15. You—to the pious poet grant wealth in thousands,
    o Agni, and refreshment abounding in heroes.

16. O Brother Agni, made by might, having ruddy horses, of blazing commandment—
    enjoy this praise of mine.
17. And you, Agni, have my praises reached—(the praises generated) for the bellowing one who yearns for (them)—
    like cows their cow-stall.
18. For you, best of the Aṅgirases, all these lovely settlements have separately
    yielded themselves to your desire, Agni.

19. With their insightful thoughts the inspired wise ones who are attentive to poetic inspiration
    have spurred Agni to join their meal.
20. You, Agni, prizewinner on the drives, do those who stretch out their ceremony
    reverently invoke as draft-horse (of the sacrifice), as Hotar.
21. Because you are of the same aspect in many places, preeminent throughout all the clans,
    in combats we call upon you.

22. Reverently invoke him, Agni who flashes forth when bepoured with (streams of) ghee.
    He will listen to this call of ours.
23. It is you we call upon, the listening Jātavedas,
    who smash away hatreds, o Agni.
24. The infallible ruler of the clans, this overseer here of the (ritual) statutes—
    Agni do I reverently invoke: he will listen.

25. Agni pulsing with excitement all his life—like a young blood spurred on to seek the prize,
    like a (prize-seeking) team do we incite him.

26. Smashing away insults and hatreds, burning demonic forces everywhere,
    Agni, shine with your sharp (flame).
27. You whom the peoples kindle, as Manu did, o best of the Aṅgirases,
    Agni, take cognizance of my speech.

28. O might-made Agni, whether you are born in heaven or born in the waters,
    we call upon you with hymns.
29. To you do these peoples here, all the lovely settlements separately,
    impel the wellspring (of nourishment) to be eaten.
30. O Agni, may we be very attentive and with manly gaze,
    crossing over difficult depths through all the days.

31. Agni, the gladdening one dear to many, sharp, pure-flamed,
    do we implore with gladdening hearts.
32. You, Agni, with far-radiant goods, dispatching (darkness) like the sun with its rays,
    vaunting yourself, you keep smashing the dark shades.
33. This we implore of you, mighty one—that your giving does not give out.
    From you, Agni, (comes) the good thing worthy to be chosen.

VIII.44 (664) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Like the last hymn, this one, though apparently divided into tr̥cas, shows little unity within the tr̥cas. Indeed, this hymn does appear to ramble, unlike the last one, in which several persistent themes provided structure. There are several signature words, especially forms of the root *śuc* "flame, blaze" and of the nominal *vásu* "good/goods." Agni's ritual function is the dominant topic, and his twin and contrasting roles as *vípra* "inspired poet" (vss. 10, 12, 21, 29) and *kaví* "sage poet" (vss. 7, 12, 21, 26, 30) are regularly mentioned. But there is no clear development in the hymn, and most of the verses contain standard descriptions and addresses to the god.

1. With a kindling stick do friendly service to Agni; with (streams of) ghee awaken the guest.
   Into him pour oblations.
2. Agni, enjoy my praise. Grow strong through this thought.
   Take delight in our hymns.

3. Agni I place in front as messenger; I appeal to him as the conveyor of the oblation:
he will make the gods sit down here.

4. Your lofty beams rise upward as you are kindled,
upward the flaming ones, shining Agni.

5. Let my ghee-filled offering spoons come near to you, delightful one.
Agni, enjoy our oblations.

6. Gladdening Hotar, seasonable offerer, of bright radiance, with far-radiant goods,
Agni do I reverently invoke—he will listen—

7. The age-old Hotar to be reverently invoked, enjoyable Agni, who has a poet's purpose,
the full glory of the ceremonies.

8. O best of the Aṅgirases, enjoying these oblations here in due order,
Agni, conduct the sacrifice at the proper season.

9. When you have been kindled, o comrade with flaming flame, convey here
the divine race, as the attentive one.

10. The inspired poet, Hotar without deceit, whose beacon is smoke, with far-radiant goods,
the beacon of the sacrifices do we implore:

11. "Agni, protect us. (Burn), god, against those who do harm.
Split hatred, o might-made one."

12. Agni beautifying his own body with an age-old thought,
the sage poet is strengthened by the inspired poet.

13. I call the child of nourishment, pure-flamed Agni,
here to this sacrifice of good ceremony.

14. You who have the might of Mitra, o Agni, with your flaming flame
sit here on our ritual grass along with the gods.

15. The mortal who serves god Agni in his own house,
just for that man will he bring goods to light.

16. Agni is the head, the peak of heaven; this (Agni) here is lord of the earth.
He quickens the spawn of the waters.

17. Your flaming flames rise up as they flash, Agni,
your lights, your beams.

18. Because you hold sway over a choice gift, Agni, as lord of the sun,
might I, your praiser, be in your shelter.

19. You, Agni, do those of inspired thought, you do they spur on with their insights.
Let our hymns strengthen you.

20. Of the undeceivable, self-empowered messenger who is always crackling—
of Agni would we choose the comradeship.
21. Agni, best possessor of flaming commandments, flaming inspired poet, flaming sage poet,
flaming he shines when he is bepoured.

22. And let my visionary thoughts, let my hymns strengthen you at all times.
Agni, take cognizance of our comradeship.
23. If I were you, Agni, or you were me,
your hopes would come true here.
24. Because you are surely the good lord of goods, Agni, with far-radiant goods,
may we be in your benevolence.

25. Agni, like rivers to the sea, to you of steadfast commandments
do our hymns go bellowing.
26. The youthful clanlord, the sage poet, omnivorous, pulsing with much excitement—
Agni do I beautify with my thoughts.
27. To the charioteer of the sacrifices, sharp-fanged, staunch,
would we make haste with praises—to Agni.

28. Let this singer here abide in you, comrade Agni.
To him be merciful, o pure one.
29. For you are a clever companion at table, always wakeful like an inspired poet.
Agni, you will give light (all the way up) to heaven.
30. Agni, in the face of difficult passages, in the face of insults, o sage poet,
lengthen our lifetime, o good one.

VIII.45 (665) Indra (except 1: Agni and Indra)

Triśoka Kāṇva
42 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The hymn begins and ends with a tr̥ca marked by a refrain (vss. 1–3 and 40–42). The tr̥ca division can otherwise be faint, and in several instances seems to contravene groupings of verse by content (see esp. vss. 36–39). The Anukramaṇī attributes the hymn to a certain Triśoka, but this name has probably been plucked from verse 30.

The first two verses establish a ritual mise-en-scène, but we quickly move into the martial and competitive mode that prevails in most of the rest of this long hymn.

Familiar chords are struck: Indra is exhorted to destroy enemies in various ferocious ways (e.g., vs. 8) and to parcel out their goods to us (e.g., vs. 15), to drink our soma and aid our efforts (e.g., vs. 14), and to give us rich gifts (e.g., vs. 12), and he is praised for his past deeds (see esp. vss. 25–30).

But the hymn also has several unusual features. The poet expresses a remarkable degree of apprehension about the exercise of Indra's powers and fear that they may be turned against him and his comrades. Although a certain amount of such sentiment (as in the beginning of vs. 10) is not rare in Indra hymns, the sequence of verses 31–35, which begins with a plea to Indra *not* to do what he has in mind and seeks to accomplish, a sharp reversal of the usual request, depicts men in fear of being Indra's targets—or perhaps even just of witnessing his terrifying hyper-power (see vss. 32, 35)—and begging for his mercy. Already in verse 19 they expressed worry about their shaky relationship with Indra, and the poet speaks of their "offenses" in verse 34, a term more at home in an Ādityan context.

Even more striking are two snatches of dialogue, which bookend the hymn: the first two verses of the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–5) and the first two verses of the penultimate tr̥ca (vss. 37–38). In the first pair the just-born Indra takes up a bow and asks his mother about potential enemies, and she replies with what appears to be a proverbial expression assuring him of his ultimate victory. (This scene has a close parallel in VIII.77.1–2.) In verses 37–38 it seems (the verses are quite obscure and uncontextualized) that Indra and the Maruts exchange slangy insults: in 37 Indra reproaches the Maruts (not named but identified by one of their epithets) for not honoring their partnership by even thinking of abandoning him, while they reply in 38 by suggesting that he should have thought of that before, when he was hogging the soma. The unspoken context is the well-known episode when all the gods *but* the Maruts abandon Indra before the Vr̥tra battle (see, e.g., VIII.96.7, using some of the same vocabulary), and the Maruts later demand from Indra a share in the soma sacrifice because they stood by him (see especially the dialogue hymn I.165). This intriguingly deracinated exchange seems to have been suggested to the poet by verse 36, in which he himself hopes not to be deprived of a comrade. If Indra himself could find himself deserted by his friends, how much more conceivable such a situation is for a mere mortal. This theme of comradeship was announced in the refrain to the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) and arises several times elsewhere in the hymn (vss. 16, 18).

Though the hymn does not have a clear structure—and its length would have made such a structure difficult to apprehend in a performance situation—the themes and concerns that keep surfacing give some sense of unity, and the two little dialogues at the two ends of the hymn grab the attention.

1. Those who kindle the fire and strew the ritual grass in due order,
   of whom Indra is the youthful comrade,
2. Lofty is their kindling wood, abundant their recitation, broad their
   sacrificial post,
   of whom Indra is the youthful comrade.

3. Unembattled himself, in battle the champion drives the troop along with his warriors,
of whom Indra is the youthful comrade.

4. The Vr̥tra-smiter took the Bunda-bow; just born, he asked his mother:
"Which ones are powerful; which ones are famed?"
5. She, the strong one [/Śavasī], replied to you: "Like a wasp at a mountain he will fight,
who desires rivalry with you."
6. And you, o bounteous one—listen: "Who wishes (something) of you, for that you exert your will.
What you will make firm, that is firm."

7. When the setter of contests drives to the contest in search of good horses, Indra
is the best charioteer of charioteers.
8. Rip apart all attackers, mace-bearer, as if into (a million) pieces.
Become the one who most receives our praises.
9. Let Indra set *our* chariot in front to win,
he whom injuries do not injure.

10. May we avoid your hatred (and be) fit for you to give to, able one.
May we go to (prizes) consisting of cattle, Indra—
11. O possessor of the (pressing) stone, (the soma drops), though they move deliberately, are bringing horses and hundreds of cattle,
are strengthening and faultless.
12. For day after day your upright liberal spirit
is ready to give thousands, hundreds to the singers.

13. For we know you as winner of spoils, Indra, bursting even into the fastnesses,
like one breaking into a household.
14. Let the drops exhilarate you, as lead horse, o sage poet, audacious one,
when we beg you for a niggard:
15. The impious rich man who has neglected to give to you bounteously,
bring his possessions here to us.

16. These comrades here, possessing the soma, watch out for you, Indra,
as those who have flourishing (cattle) watch out for their livestock.
17. And you, who are not deaf but have listening ears,
do we call here from afar for help.
18. When you should hear this call here, you should do (a deed) difficult to forget, and then
you would become our most intimate friend.

19. For even though we've thought that we've been going a wayward course to you,
still become for us a giver of cows, Indra.
20. As elderly men grasp a staff, we have grasped hold of you, lord of strength.
We want you in our seat.
21. Sing a praise song to Indra, the warrior of much manliness,
whom none obstruct in battle.

22. When it has been pressed, I set you loose on the pressed (soma) to drink it, o bull.
Become satiated; come through to exhilaration.
23. Let not the greedy dolts, let not the deriders deceive you.
Do not cherish those who hate the sacred formulation.
24. Here let the (soma drinks) with their profusion of cows [=milk] exhilarate you to generosity.
Drink a lake, as a buffalo does.

25. Those (deeds) that the Vr̥tra-smiter set in motion afar, both the old ones and the new,
proclaim these at the assemblies:
26. Indra drank the pressed (soma) of Kadrū for that which possesses a thousand-arms [=battle?].
Then he displayed his own masculine power.
27. This is real: having obtained at Turvaśa's and Yadu's what is not to be spurned [=soma],
he came through to victory by his labor.

28. I laud him to you as the surpassing one, as driller of the bovine prize for the peoples,
and as one common (to all)—
29. As the master of the R̥bhus, not to be obstructed, as the strengthener of the son of Tugra [=Bhujyu] (do I laud him) in solemn words
when the soma is pressed—Indra!
30. Who cut apart the broad, womblike mountain for Triśoka,
as a way for the cows to go forth.

31. What you take on, have in mind, and, becoming exhilarated, set out to accomplish,
don't do that, Indra. Have mercy!
32. For even a paltry deed of one such as you is famed on earth.
Let your mind go (to us?), Indra.
33. Just yours will be these glorifications and encomia,
when, Indra, you will be merciful to us.

34. Don't smite us at a single offense, nor at two or three,
    nor at many, o champion.
35. For I am afraid of one such as you—powerful, shattering,
    wondrous, vanquishing with his attack.
36. Let me not find the lack of a comrade, nor of a son, o you of
        outstanding goods.
    Let your mind be turned here.

37. [Indra to Maruts:] "You young bucks—who, (as if) unpaired, has said,
        as comrade to comrade,
    'I will leave (you)'? Who retreats from us?"
38. [Maruts to Indra:] "Hey bull. So—when (the soma) was pressed, being
        insatiable you consumed a lot,
    sashaying around the lower depths like a guy with 'the dog-killer' [=the
        winning throw at dice]."
39. I hold onto these two fallow bays of yours, yoked by speech, along with
        their chariot,
    so that you will give to the formulators.

40. Split off all hatreds; parry oppressions. Smite the slighters.
    The craved good thing—bring that here.
41. What is in a firm place, what in a solid place, Indra, what has been
        borne away into a deep place—
    the craved good thing—bring that here.
42. The abundance given by you that the whole people of Manu
        will know—
    the craved good thing—bring that here.

VIII.46 (666) Indra (1–20), Dānastuti (21–24), Vāyu (25–28), Dānastuti (29–33)

Vaśa Aśvya
33 verses: a variety of lyric meters combining 8- and 12- and 4-syllable pādas

This hymn has been called the most metrically varied hymn in the R̥gveda: it contains verses of nearly twenty different meters, although all the verses that allow analysis appear to be made up of the standard building blocks of eight-, twelve-, and four-syllable pādas in various combinations. (Some irresolvable irregularities remain.) For the most part, the verses are grouped into two-verse pairs (anomalous pragāthas), but the hymn begins with a tr̥ca (vss. 1–3), and the metrically messy verses 14–16 also appear to form a tr̥ca. The two dānastuti sections (vss. 21–24 and 29–33), broken by two pragāthas to Vāyu, show no internal metrical structure. The meter is discussed by Oldenberg with his characteristic acuity both in the *Prolegomena* (1888: 109–10) and in the *Noten*.

The hymn is miscellaneous in content as well. It begins and continues for some time as a fairly standard Indra hymn, insistently focused on begging Indra for gifts of all sorts. The Indra section continues through verse 20, but becomes more and more problematic, with metrical and syntactic difficulties reinforcing each other. Verses 14–16 are metrically almost unanalyzable, and they consist in great part of syntactic fragments the relationships among which are difficult to construct. Verse 17 (paired in a pragātha with 18) equally resists metrical and exegetical certainty, but introduces the Maruts as a counterweight to Indra; in verse 18 we return to more rational metrical structure and, to some degree, analyzable syntax. The last two verses of the Indra section (19–20) are fairly straightforward and bring the praise of Indra to a conclusion with an explosion of adjectives (the first hemistich of 20 is also made entirely of vocatives).

The remaining thirteen verses of the hymn consist of three almost equal parts: two dānastutis (vss. 21–24, 29–33), interrupted by a dānastuti-tinged section addressed to the wind god Vāyu, who participates in the Morning Pressing, when the priestly gifts are distributed. Both dānastutis mention extravagant numbers of livestock. In the first the poet Vaśa Aśvya mentions himself (vs. 21) and his patron Pr̥thuśravas Kānita (vss. 21, 24); the final verse (24) of this first dānastuti has a distinctly summary tone and clearly spells out the cause-and-effect relation between gifts and fame. The second dānastuti mentions a more various set of patrons, and the poet names himself in the final verse (33), as a "great maiden," clearly his favorite gift, is brought toward him. The diction and style of both dānastutis is straightforward; they lack the sly puns and clever insult-as-praise and praise-as-insult that characterize many dānastutis and seem intent only on counting up the spoils. The four intervening verses (25–28) describes Vāyu's dawn journey to the sacrifice, but it is made clear that his purpose there is to give, or (vs. 27) to motivate the patron to give, to the poet.

1. To such a one as you, Indra, you leader with many goods,
   do we belong, you mounter of the fallow bays.
2. For we know you, possessor of the stone, as real, as giver of
   refreshments;
   we know you as giver of riches—
3. You, of a hundred forms of help and a hundred resolves, whose
   greatness
   the bards hymn with hymns.

4. That mortal has good guidance whom the Maruts, whom Aryaman
   and Mitra protect—those without deceit.
5. Acquiring (wealth) in cows and horses and an abundance of heroes,
   impelled by the Ādityas, he flares up
   with much craved wealth always.

6. We beseech this Indra for a gift, him swelling with strength, fearless—
   we beseech the lord of wealth for wealth.

7. For in him exist all fearless forms of help altogether.
 Let the spans convey him hither, who has many goods; let the fallow bays convey him to the pressed (soma) for exhilaration.

8. Your exhilaration, which is worthy to be chosen, which is the most Vṛtra-smiting, o Indra,
 which with superior men takes the sun, which is difficult to surpass in battles—
9. Which, difficult to surpass, worthy of fame, is the overcomer in the prize-contests, o you who grant all wishes—
 you, o strongest good one—come here to our pressings. May we go to a pen full of cows.

10. At our desire for cows, for horses, and for chariots, (now) just as before,
 create wide space for us, you greatly great one.
11. For I do not find a limit to your generosity in any way, o champion.
 Show favor to us, bounteous possessor of the stone, even now. You have aided our poetic insights with your prizes.

12. The lofty one who makes his comrade famous, he, praised by many, knows all the races.
 Through the human lifespans they all call on him, on Indra the powerful, with their offering ladles extended.
13. He will become our helper in the prize-contests—he of many goods, the one who stands in front, the bounteous Vṛtra-smiter.

14. Sing to the hero amid the raptures of the stalk; with a great hymn (sing) to the discriminating one,
 Indra by name, worthy of fame, capable like speech.
15. (You are by nature) one who gives a legacy to the body [=a son], who gives goods, who gives a prizewinner in the prize-contests, o much invoked one—
 now then (do so)!
16. (Sing to him) who has control of all goods, who also, when he is victorious, has control of this form (of his?),
 (and has control) over those who yearn (for him). Now then!

17. We shall praise you great ones [=Maruts] for the rewarder fit for nourishment, who comes fittingly, who comes regularly [=Indra].
 Through the sacrifices and the hymns of all the peoples of Manu, you [=Indra] are likely to attain (the favor) of the Maruts.
 I sing to you reverently with a hymn.
18. Those who launch themselves in flight on their drives along the backs of the mountains—
 the sacrifice of those greatly noisy ones, the favor of those powerfully noisy ones (you are likely to attain) while the ceremony is pro(ceeding).

19. O strongest Indra, bring here the shatterer of bad thoughts,
    (namely) wealth to be harnessed for us, o you who stir thought—
    preeminent (wealth), o you who stir thought.
20. O winner, good winner, powerful, brilliant, most brilliant, liberal-spirited,
    sovereign king, (bring wealth) victorious through victory,
    victory-winning, enjoyable, foremost at the prize-contests.

21. Let him come here—any non-god who has taken as great a gift
    as Vaśa Aśvya has taken from Pr̥thuśravas Kānita at the dawning of this (dawn) here.
22. I have won sixty thousands in equine property, myriads, twenty hundreds of camels,
    ten hundreds of dusky mares, ten of those with three red spots, ten thousands of cows.
23. Ten dusky (stallions), following wealth to fulfillment,
    straight-tailed, swift,
    skittish, have turned the felly homeward.
24. These are the gifts of Pr̥thuśravas Kānita, the very generous.
    In giving a golden chariot, he has become the most bounteous patron.
    He has made his fame the highest.

25. Vāyu, drive here to us for the extension and the spread (of our line) to be great and for bounty.
    For we have performed (a sacrifice) for you, for you to give much, to give greatly all at once.
26. As the one who drives here with his horses at the breaking of the day—
    with the thrice seven seventies—
    (invigorated) with these soma drinks by the soma-pressers, (be ready) to give, you soma-drinker, drinker of the clear purified (soma).

27. The one of good resolve who by his breath invigorated just this man here, to give something brilliant to me
    in the axle made of *araṭu* wood, in the presence of Nahuṣa, who is a good performer (of rituals) for (a god) who performs even better,
28. You who are an independent king, in a wondrous form worthy of praise and bathed in ghee, o Vāyu—
    this drive (of yours), horse-impelled, dust-impelled, dog-impelled, pro(ceeds). Here it is now!

29. Now then, I have won something dear to the vigorous one, sixty thousand
    (geldings, which are) just like stallions.
30. Like cattle to their herd, the geldings approach, the geldings approach me.
31. Then when in a roving band [=caravan] a hundred camels roared,
    then (I took) twenty hundreds from the Śvitnas.

32. I, the inspired poet, took a hundred from Balbūtha Tarukṣa the Dāsa.
    These are your peoples here, Vāyu. With Indra as protector they become exhilarated; with the gods as protectors they become exhilarated.
33. And now this great maiden, facing Vaśa Aśvya,
    with bright ornaments upon her, is led forth.

VIII.47 (667) Ādityas

Trita Āptya
18 verses: mahāpaṅkti

The first two-thirds of this hymn (through vs. 12) beg the Ādityas for general help and protection from generic evils—the nonspecific nature of what is requested underlined by the rather redundantly phrased refrain. The refrain continues through the last third of the hymn (vss. 13–18), but in the non-refrain portions the focus narrows—to the elimination of the "bad dream," which is sent far away to the shadowy figure called Trita Āptya. Nothing else in the scraps of mythology we know about Trita Āptya explains why he should be the scapegoated recipient of our nightmares, much less why he would make them into body ornaments (vs. 15) or use them as food and work (vs. 16). The agent who removes the bad dream to Trita is Dawn (vss. 14–16, 18), whose participation is easier to understand—as anyone knows who has experienced the relief of waking in the morning to discover that the nightmares just experienced were not real.

1. Great is the help, of (all of) you who are great, for the pious man, o Varuṇa and Mitra.
   Whomever you protect from deceit, o Ādityas, evil will not reach him.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
2. You know how to make evils stay away, o gods, o Ādityas.
   Like birds their wings, spread your shelter out above us.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
3. Spread that shelter out over us, like birds their wings.
   We revere all things providing defense, o you who possess all possessions.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
4. Mankind—to which the attentive ones gave peaceful dwelling and livelihood—
   over all its wealth do these Ādityas hold sway.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
5. Evils will avoid us, as charioteers avoid hard places.
   Might we be in the shelter of Indra and the help of the Ādityas.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

6. It is only by a crooked course that in such a way a man becomes lost to what is given by you.
   O gods, o Ādityas, it's not a trifle that he obtained from you—the man whom you spurred on.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
7. Negligence, sharp or weighty, will never beset him
   to whom you, Ādityas, have given broad shelter.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
8. We abide in you, o gods, like fighters in armor.
   You—deliver us from a great offense; you—from a small one.
   – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
9. Let Aditi deliver us; let Aditi spread her shelter—
   the mother of rich Mitra, of Aryaman and Varuṇa.
   –Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
10. That sheltering shelter, o gods, beneficial and without damage,
    providing threefold defense—spread that out over us.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
11. For you, o Ādityas, gaze down (on us), like spies from a hillside.
    You will lead us along an easy way like steeds to an easy ford.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
12. There is no benefit for the demonic here, for him to descend and to come near.
    There is benefit for the milk-giving cow and for the hero seeking fame.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
13. Whatever is ill-done in the open, whatever in secret, o gods,
    all that set on Trita Āptya, far away from us.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
14. The bad dream in the cattle and the one in us, o Daughter of Heaven—
    carry it away to Trita Āptya, o far-radiant one.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
15. He will make (it) his neck ornament or his garland, o Daughter of Heaven—
    the whole bad dream we consign to Trita Āptya.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
16. To the one who has it as his food and as his work, to the one reverently approaching it as his portion—
    to Trita and to Dvita, o Dawn, carry the bad dream.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.
17. Just as we bring back a sixteenth, then an eighth, then the (whole) debt,
    even so we bring the whole bad dream to Āptya.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

18. We have conquered today and we have won; we have become free
    of blame.
    O Dawn, the bad dream which we have feared, let (dawn) dawn it away.
    – Your help is faultless; very helpful is your help.

VIII.48 (668) Soma

Pragātha Kaṇva
15 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 5

This well-known and frequently translated hymn is one of the very few dedicated to Soma outside of the IXth Maṇḍala, and as such does not concern "self-purifying" Soma (Soma Pavamāna), the subject of that maṇḍala. The preparation of soma is not treated here, save for a single reference (vs. 7) to it as "pressed." Instead the emphasis is on soma's effects, "when drunk" (*pītá* vss. 4, 5, 10, 12), on the drinker. The immediate effect is euphoria; as in the famous exultant boast in verse 3 "we have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods." The soma produces a sense of space and boundlessness (vss. 1, 2, 5) while, paradoxically, being confined in the drinker's body (vss. 2, 9, 10) and holding this body together (vs. 5). The temporal equivalent of this spatial expansion is the wish constantly expressed to "lengthen our lifetime" (vss. 4, 7, 10, 11). Soma is thus characterized by vitality, or life force, which he also confers on the drinker: the first and last verses of the hymn contain this signature word *váyas*.

The mood in the second half of the hymn darkens slightly. Though the poet still sees Soma as his protector and kindly comrade, he senses the threats that cause him to need that protection—threats from outside (vs. 8), from his own imperfect actions (vs. 9), and even from soma itself (vs. 10). Though he ultimately pronounces the threats vanquished (vs. 11), the mood of sheer exuberance has been broken.

The final few verses (12–14) take a more ritual turn, with our ceremonial dedication of an oblation to soma, in his connection with the forefathers (who themselves receive soma, as is made clear elsewhere). The ancestor cult thus briefly surfaces here, and the emphasis throughout the hymn on lengthening our lifetimes (on earth) may provide a counterpoint to the ritually shaped afterlife inhabited by our ancestors.

1. I of good wisdom have partaken of the vitality of the sweet drink, which
   is rich in purpose and excellent at finding wide space,
   which all the gods and mortals, calling it honey, converge upon.
2. When you have gone within, you will become Aditi [/boundlessness],
   appeaser of divine wrath.
   Drop, enjoying the comradeship of Indra, like an obedient mare
   following the chariot-pole, you should follow riches to fulfillment.

3. We have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods.
   What can hostility do to us now, and what the malice of a mortal, o immortal one?
4. Become weal for our heart when drunk, o drop, very kindly, like a father to a son,
   like a comrade to a comrade, you who are widely proclaimed as insightful. Lengthen our lifetime, for us to live, Soma.
5. These glorious (drops), when drunk, seek wide space. As cows [=leather straps] do a chariot, it [=soma] knots (me) together in my joints.
   Let the drops guard me from my foot slipping, and let them keep me away from lameness.
6. You have enflamed me like a churned fire. Make us conspicuous; make us better off,
   for now in the exhilaration of you, Soma, I think of myself as a rich man. I shall advance to prosperity.
7. With a vigorous mind we would take a share of you when pressed, as of ancestral wealth.
   King Soma, lengthen our lifetimes, like the sun the dawning days.
8. King Soma, be merciful to us with well-being. We are under your commandment: know this.
   Potency and battle fervor are on the rise, o drop. Don't hand us over (to the battle fervor) of the stranger, at his wish.
9. For as protector of our body, Soma, you have settled down in every limb, having your eyes on men.
   If we will confound your commandments, be merciful to us, as our good comrade, all the more, o god.
10. Might I be accompanied by a tender-hearted comrade, who would not harm me when it has been drunk, o possessor of fallow bay horses.
    This soma here that has been deposited in us—for it I go to Indra to lengthen our lifetime.
11. These famines and diseases have gone off. Those allied to darkness have shied away; they have become afraid.
    Soma has mounted us to his full extent. We have gone to where they lengthen lifetime.
12. O forefathers, the drop that, once drunk, entered into our hearts, the immortal into the mortals,
    to this Soma we would do ceremonial honor with an oblation. May we be in his mercy and good grace.
13. You, Soma, coming to agreement with the forefathers, extend through heaven and earth.
    To you, drop, we would do ceremonial honor with an oblation. May we be lords of riches.

14. Protector Gods, speak on our behalf. Let sleep not master us, nor mumbling.
    May we, always dear to Soma, possessed of good heroes, announce the ceremonial honor.
15. You, o Soma, confer vitality on us on all sides; you, as finder of the sun, possessing the eye of men—enter us.
    You, o drop, along with your help—protect us from behind and also from in front.

Vālakhilya Hymns

The following eleven hymns (VIII.49–59) are known as the Vālakhilya hymns. These are apocryphal or, in Geldner's felicitous description, "half-apocryphal" (*halbapokryph*). A number of *khilāni* or apocrypha were transmitted in the R̥gvedic tradition, but only these eleven (or, in some other reported recensions, somewhat fewer) were inserted into and transmitted within the R̥gveda Saṃhitā itself, as well as in the khilāni collections. Moreover, these eleven were transmitted with accents and were treated in the Padapāṭha, the Anukramaṇī (save for the tenth, VIII.58), and so forth, though they were not commented on by Sāyaṇa in his R̥gvedic commentary. In our R̥gveda recension, the Śākalya, they were inserted between the sixth and seventh anuvākas of VIII, though they are reported to appear elsewhere in other recensions, not always in a single group. The Grassmann numbers, 1018–1028, reflect the status of these hymns as additions to the original saṃhitā.

The text of these hymns is in general less well transmitted than the rest of the R̥gveda, and the hymns themselves sometimes have the air of a school exercise. Notable in this connection is the fact that the first eight hymns proceed in pairs, each pair dedicated to the same divinity (except for a few verses in the third pair, VIII.53–54) and containing the same number of verses in the same meter (except for a few verses in the last pair, VIII.55–56). Moreover, the first pair (VIII.49–50) and, to a much lesser extent, the second pair (VIII.51–52) follow the same model, verse by verse, often using identical or near identical vocabulary but varying grammar, or else employing transparent lexical substitution but keeping the grammar the same, and one can imagine that the two hymns represent separate realizations of a set pedagogical task. However, whatever the reason for their coupling, the pairs afford us interesting insights into the composition of R̥gvedic hymns. For this reason, as well as the fact that puzzles in one hymn of the pair are sometimes illuminated by the parallel passages in the other, we will comment on the first two sets of paired hymns together.

VIII.49 (1018) Indra

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
10 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 50.

This pair of hymns follows a standard trajectory: the poet exhorts himself to praise Indra for his generosity and his power, and then invites Indra to partake of the soma at his sacrifice, traveling with his fallow bays from wherever he might be. The final pragātha asks Indra to provide the same help and largesse as he has on other occasions at the sacrifices of other, named individuals.

The interest in these two hymns lies in the interplay between the quite strict parallelism in parts of each verse and the freedom with which the poet treats the variable portions. There is no space here for a full catalogue of the correspondences, but a few telling patterns will be noted. First, despite the pervasive parallelism there are no repeated pādas between the hymns. The initial verses of the two hymns (49.1, 50.1) are perhaps the most fully parallel, and in subsequent verses the beginnings and ends of pādas and half lines are more likely to be parallel than the middles, not surprisingly given the salience of these positions. Responsion can take a number of different forms. Frequently there is exact responsion, as in 49/50.6c *udrī́va vajrinn avatáḥ*… "Like a well-spring full of water, o mace-bearer…." Single-word repetitions will ordinarily take the same metrical position, as in the pāda-final *surā́dhasam* of 49/50.1a. Derivationally different synonyms can correspond, as in 49.5c *svadáyanti* / 50.5c *svádanti*, both "they sweeten"; similarly, to stems belonging to the same root but with different nuances, 49.10c *ásanoḥ* "you won" versus 50.10c *ásiṣāsaḥ* "you sought to win." Or an expanded phrase can take the place of a single word, as in 49.8b *vā́tā iva* "like the winds" versus 50.8b *ójo vā́tasya* "the power of the wind." Synonyms or functionally identical words can respond, as in 49.5b *(d)hiyānó áśvo ná* "being spurred on like a horse" and 50.5b *iyānó átyo ná* "being sped like a steed," where the morphology and word order are identical, but the lexical realization entirely different. Phonological correspondence is not neglected, as in the adjectives in the parallel phrases 49.8a *aj**irā́so** hárayaḥ* "nimble fallow bays" and 50.8a *rath**irā́so** hárayaḥ* "fallow bays fit for the chariot." And of course there is rough semantic parallelism throughout the two hymns, even when there is no lexical, morphological, syntactic, or phonological identity. It is also the case that one of the pair can provide the answer to an obscurity in the other, as in 49.2a where *śatānīkeva* "like (something) with a hundred facets" responds to 50.2a *śatānīkā hetáyaḥ* "missiles with a hundred facets," where the comparandum is explicit.

1. Chant forth to Indra, the very generous, in the way that is known—
   who as a bounteous one possessing many goods—by the thousands, as it
   were—exerts himself for you singers.
2. Like (a missile) with a hundred facets he advances boldly. He smashes
   obstacles for the pious man.

Like the juices [=streams] of a much-nourishing mountain his gifts swell forth.

3. The pressed drops that are your exhilarating drinks, o Indra who longs for songs,
fill you, o mace-bearer, like waters a pond, following the accustomed way, for your generosity, o champion.
4. Faultless, (life-)extending, strengthening—the sweetest of honey—drink it,
so that becoming exhilarated, you will by yourself boldly scatter forth (goods) to us like specks (of dust).

5. Being spurred on like a horse by the pressers, (come) at a run to our praise,
which the milk-cows and the gifts sweeten for you, autonomous Indra, among the Kaṇvas.
6. With homage we reverently approach (you) like a powerful hero, the distinguished one dispensing imperishable goods.
Like a wellspring full of water for the one who pours it out, the poetic thoughts flow (for you), Indra, bearer of the mace.

7. Whether now (you are) either at (another's) sacrifice or (elsewhere) on the earth,
from there come here to our sacrifice with your swift (horses), you of great thought, powerful with your powerful (ones).
8. Nimble are your fallow bays, which are swift and overpowering like the winds,
with which you speed around the progeny of Manu, with which (you speed around) the whole (world), (for it) to see the sun.

9. We beg for such great cattle-bringing benevolence of yours, Indra,
as when you helped Medhyātithi, o bounteous one, as when (you helped) Nīpātithi to spoils—
10. Just as at Kaṇva's, at Trasadasyu's, o bounteous one, as at Paktha Daśavraja's,
just as at Gośarya R̥jiśvan's, Indra, you won (wealth) in cattle and gold.

VIII.50 (1019) Indra

Puṣṭigu Kāṇva
10 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 49.

1. Chant forth to the famed, very generous, able one for his dominance,
who grants to the presser and to the praiser desirable goods, by the thousands as it were.

2. His missiles with a hundred facets are difficult to overcome, the great projectiles of Indra.
   Like a beneficial mountain he swells among the bounteous ones when the pressed (soma drinks) have exhilarated him.

3. When the pressed drops have exhilarated the dear one,
   like waters my pressing has been deposited (in you), good one, (and it will be) like milking cows for the pious.
4. Your [=poets'] thoughts of honey flow to the faultless (soma), which is calling for help.
   The drops, calling on you [=Indra], good one, have been set among the praisers.

5. Being sped like a steed, he [=Indra] streams to our soma, good at the ceremony,
   which our greetings sweeten for you, self-giving one. At Paura's you take pleasure in the invocation.
6. (Chant) forth to the powerful hero, the discriminating one who gains the stakes, the distinguished one of great generosity.
   Like a wellspring full of water, mace-bearer, you always swell goods for the pious man.

7. Whether now (you are) at a distance either on earth or in heaven,
   hitching up with your fallow bays, o Indra of great thought, come here, lofty with your lofty (horses)—
8. Fit for the chariot are your fallow bays, which, unfailing, cross over the power of the wind,
   with which you made the Dasyu heed because of Manu, with which you speed around the sun.

9. Might we know such help of yours anew, o champion,
   as when you helped Etaśa when the stake was to be decided, as (you helped) Vaśa at Daśavraja's.
10. Just as at Kaṇva's, o bounteous one, at the ritual offering, at the ceremony, beside (Agni), the domestic leader of long counsel,
   just as at Gośarya's you sought winnings, you possessor of the stone, at my side (win) a cowpen splendid with fallow bays.

VIII.51 (1020) Indra

Śruṣṭigu Kāṇva
10 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 52.

By contrast to VIII.49–50, the parallelism of these two hymns is quite muted and surfaces only occasionally. Not only are strict responsions rare, but the development of the thought in each hymn is quite distinct, though both focus on Indra as

generous giver. The correspondence between the two hymns is clearest at the beginning: both hymns have almost identical initial verses, save for the personal names of the human hosts. These verses also have the same structure as the final verses of VIII.49–50.10. There is also some verbal responsion in the beginning of verses 3 and 5, throughout much of verse 6, and at the beginning of verse 7, and there are also correspondences that cross verse lines, for instance, 51.6c=52.4c *táṃ tvā vayám*… "we you…," with the continuation of that pāda (51.6c) *maghavann indra girvaṇaḥ* "o bounteous Indra who longs for songs" matched in 52.8a.

As just noted, both hymns are primarily concerned to stimulate Indra to generosity. In VIII.51 are interspersed several obscure references to unknown sagas: verse 2 with the old, prone Praskaṇva set upright (Praskaṇva figures also in nearby VIII.54.8, but only as beneficiary of Indra's largesse, and he is the poet to whom I.44–50 as well as VIII.49, the first Vālakhilya hymn, are attributed) and Indra's defeat of Krivi (vs. 8). And in verses 4 and 8, in identical language, an apparently miraculous birth follows ritual and cosmogonic activity. One of these acts is the chanting of a "seven-headed, threefold chant in the highest footstep" (vs. 4), and a stripped-down version of the same phrase, "they chanted the chant" is found in the final verse (10), with the current poets as subject, thus implicitly attributing cosmogonic powers to the poets of today.

The construction of VIII.52 is far less orderly than that of 51. It is characterized by subordinate clauses that lack main clauses (e.g., vss. 2, 3), lack of grammatical agreement between apparently coreferential entities (e.g., sg. "whose" picked up by "we" in vs. 4; similar disharmony in vs. 8), and a general looseness of structure especially in the verses that lack all responsion to 51. If this was a school exercise, perhaps it was an unsuccessful one.

1. Just as at Manu Sāṃvaraṇi's you drank pressed soma, Indra,
   and at Nīpātithi's, at Medhyātithi's, (do so) at Puṣṭigu's, at Śruṣṭigu's,
   bounteous one.
2. Pārṣadvāṇa made old Praskaṇva, who was lying down, sit upright
   together (with him, at a sacrificial session?).
   The seer sought to win thousands of cattle; Dasyave Vṛka was aided
   by you.

3. He who cannot get enough of hymns, who is the observant stimulator
   of seers,
   to this Indra speak with a newer thought, to give sustenance to him like
   a man greedy for food.
4. He for whom they chanted the seven-headed, threefold chant in the
   highest footstep,
   that one made all these worlds cry out. Right after that his masculine
   nature was born.

5. He who is the giver of goods to us, that Indra we invoke,
   for we know his ever newer favor. Might we go to a pen full of cattle.

6. He to whom you exert yourself to give, o good one, that one achieves the thriving of wealth.
   We, who have pressed (the soma), invoke you, o bounteous Indra who longs for songs.

7. Never are you a barren cow, nor, Indra, do you go dry for the pious man.
   Over and over, more and more, the gift coming from you, the god, becomes engorged.
8. He who attained Krivi by his strength, while making Śuṣṇa heed with his murderous weapons,
   just when he propped up yonder heaven as he spread it out, right after that the earth dweller was born.

9. You to whom every Ārya here belongs, every Dāsa, every treasure-guarding stranger,
   even across (all these) (come) to the Arya Ruśama Parīru. There there is wealth anointed just for you.
10. The eager inspired poets have chanted a honeyed, ghee-dripping chant.
   Among us wealth spreads out and bullish power; among us are the drops being pressed.

VIII.52 (1021) Indra

Āyu Kāṇva
10 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas. Parallel to 51.

1. Just as at Manu Vivasvant's you drank pressed soma, able one,
   just as at Trita's you will enjoy the poem, Indra, (even so) at Āyu's you bring yourself to exhilaration—
2. (Just as) at Pr̥ṣadhra's, at Medhya's, at Mātariśvan's, Indra, you became exhilarated on the (soma) being pressed,
   just as at Daśasipra's, at Daśoṇya's, at Syūmaraśmi's, at R̥jūnas' (you drank) the soma.

3. He who took as his own the hymns, who boldly drank the soma,
   for whom Viṣṇu strode his three steps, according to the institutes of their alliance…
4. In whose praises, Indra, you will take pleasure when the prize (is set), you prizewinner of a hundred resolves…
   Eager for fame, we call to you, as milkers call on a cow who gives good milk.

5. Who is a giver to us, he is our father—great, powerful, performing the master's part.
   Even without our begging, let the powerful bounteous one who possesses many goods give to us of cow and horse.
6. He to whom you are ready to give, o good one, that one spurs the thriving of wealth.
   Seeking goods, with praises we call on the lord of goods possessing a hundred resolves: Indra.

7. Never do you stay away; you protect both breeds [=gods and men].
   O fourth Āditya, the invocation destined for you, for Indra, has mounted to the immortal (world?) in heaven.
8. For whatever pious one, o bounteous Indra who long for songs, you muster your abilities, able one—
   listen to *our* songs and lovely praise, o good one, to *our* call, like that of the Kaṇvas.

9. The age-old thought has been expressed as praise. Speak the sacred formulation to Indra.
   Many lofty (songs) of truth have roared; the wise thoughts of the praiser have been released.
10. Indra shook together lofty riches, together the two opponents [=Heaven and Earth], together the sun.
    Together the gleaming pure soma-drinks, together those mixed with milk, have exhilarated Indra.

VIII.53 (1022) Indra

Medhya Kāṇva
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas.

A fairly conventional Indra hymn, which begins with a string of superlatives applied to Indra and praise for his previous deeds (vss. 1–2) and then proceeds to the invitation to the soma sacrifice (vss. 3–4). The poet asks Indra for the usual benefits: wealth and aid, but he is especially concerned with winning in prize-contests and battle raids. See especially verses 6–8.

1. You, the best of bounteous ones and most preeminent of bulls,
   best stronghold-splitter, o bounteous Indra, finder of cows, lord of wealth do we beseech for wealth.
2. You who set Āyu, Kutsa, Atithigva to shaking, while growing stronger every day,
   you do we invoke, seeking prizes—you of the fallow bay horses, possessing a hundred resolves.

3. Let the stones pour out the honey's juice of all of us—
   the drops that have been pressed in the distance among (other) peoples,
   and those that have been pressed nearby.
4. Smash all hatreds and bring them low. Let all (of us) win goods.
   Even among the Śīṣṭas there are invigorating shoots for you, where you
   become sated on soma.

5. Indra, come closer here with your help that provides secure wisdom—
   here, most wealful one with your most wealful superior powers, here,
   friendly one with your friendly powers.
6. Make the lord of the settlements surpassing in the contest, governing all
   domains, sharer in offspring.
   With your powers lengthen (the lifetime of those) who, equipped with
   solemn words, purify your resolve following the proper order,

7. (Your resolve) to help which best brings success. Might we be yours in
   the bouts.
   May we consider ourselves winners through our libations and
   invocations to the gods.
8. For I, seeking the prize, enter the contest for the sacred formulation
   always with your help, you of the fallow bays.
   Seeking horses, seeking cows, I pledge myself just to you, at the
   beginning of raids.

VIII.54 (1023) Indra (1–2, 5–8), All Gods (3–4)

Mātariśvan Kāṇva
8 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas

Despite being technically twinned with VIII.53, this hymn has little in common with its predecessor. However, verse 6 not only shares the concern for winning that characterized the previous hymn, but also shares some of its phraseology: it begins with a compound of *ājí* "contest" and two compounds with *-pati* "lord," closely paralleling VIII.53.6a, and much of the second half of the verse matches the second half of VIII.53.7.

The three pragāthas dedicated to Indra (vss. 1–2, 5–6, 7–8) are interrupted by one to the All Gods, an elementary listing of various groups of gods (vs. 3) and individual gods and natural forces (vs. 4). The verses to Indra beg him to display his generosity.

1. This heroic deed of yours, Indra, the bards sing with songs.
   Beating time they furthered the nourishment dripping with ghee. The
   Pauras approach with their visionary thoughts.

2. With their good (ritual) work they approach Indra for help—they at whose pressings you reach exhilaration.
   Just as you became exhilarated at Saṃvarta's, at Kr̥śa's, just so become exhilarated among us.

3. All you gods joined in revelry, come here to us.
   The Vasus, the Rudras will come here to help us. Let the Maruts hear our call.
4. Let Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī aid my calling, let the Seven Streams.
   Let the Waters, the Wind, the Mountains, the Lord of the Forest, let Earth hear my call.

5. What bounteous generosity is yours, most bounteous Indra,
   with that become a feasting companion for our strengthening, become Bhaga for giving, o Vr̥tra-smasher.
6. Because just you are lord of contests, lord of men, convey us to the prize, o you of good resolve.
   By their (ritual) pursuit, by their oblations and by their pursuits of the gods, they have become far famed as winners.

7. For the hopes of the stranger come true: in Indra is the lifetime of the peoples.
   Approach us, to help, bounteous one. Milk out swelling refreshment.
8. Might we do honor to you, Indra, with praises. You are ours, you of a hundred resolves.
   Great, sturdy, enduring, unabashed generosity—make it spill down for Praskaṇva.

VIII.55 (1024) Dānastuti of Praskaṇva

Kr̥śa Kāṇva
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–2, 4, anuṣṭubh 3, 5

Although the Anukramaṇī identifies this hymn as a dānastuti of Praskaṇva by Kr̥śa Kāṇva, as Geldner points out, it is more likely a dānastuti *by* Praskaṇva (mentioned in the last verse of the previous hymn, VIII.54.8) to Dasyave Vr̥ka, mentioned in the first verse of this one.

This little hymn begins almost like a parody of the great proclamations of great deeds such as I.32: the poet briskly announces that he's finished with his catalogue of Indra's heroic deeds and can now turn to the praise of his patron's generosity. The following two verses (2–3) list a miscellany of gifts, including some odd ones. He then praises the Kaṇvas in general (vs. 4) and returns to the gift in the final verse

(5). Its sevenfold nature (if that's what the word means here: it's disputed) is not achieved until the end: the items listed in verses 2–3 add up to six groups, but with the mares of 5ab we reach seven.

1. Since I have just abundantly surveyed the heroism of Indra, your generosity
   will now follow, Dasyave Vr̥ka.
2. A hundred gleaming white oxen shine like the stars in heaven;
   with their might they seem to prop up heaven itself.
3. A hundred bamboo stalks, a hundred dogs, a hundred tanned hides,
   a hundred ewes with tufts like *balbaja*-grass, four hundred ruddy (cows) (did you give me).
4. You have the gods well on your side, you descendants of Kaṇva. Passing from strength to strength
   like horses they keep pace.
5. From here on they will keep paying tribute to the sevenfold (gift). Great is the praise of (the gift) that lacks nothing.
   When the dusky (mares) dust over the paths, they are not to be encompassed by the eye.

VIII.56 (1025) Dānastuti of Praskaṇva (1–4), Agni and Sūrya (5)

Pr̥ṣadhra Kāṇva
5 verses: gāyatrī 1–4, paṅkti 5

Like the preceding hymn, this is more likely a dānastuti *by* Praskaṇva of his patron Dasyave Vr̥ka (once again mentioned in vs. 1) than *of* Praskaṇva. The hymn follows the general pattern of VIII.55: the generosity of the patron is praised in the first verse, and the details of the gifts follow, especially in verses 3 and 4. The latter verse describes the presentation of an adorned female whose identity is disputed, as the readings of the R̥gveda and the khila collections differ. Some scholars consider her to be Pūtakratu's wife, thus the patron's mother or stepmother, but the daughter of Pūtakratu's wife (following the R̥gveda reading with some minor adjustment), the patron's sister or half-sister, might make more sense. The final verse (5) to Agni and Sūrya marks the moment of the kindling of the ritual fire at sunrise, when the ritual gifts are distributed.

1. Your immoderate generosity has just been seen, Dasyave Vr̥ka—
   Your capacious power is like heaven in its extent.
2. To me Dasyave Vr̥ka, son of Pūtakratu,
   granted ten thousands from his own wealth.
3. A hundred donkeys for me, a hundred wooly ewes,
   a hundred slaves, and garlands beyond that.

4. Then there was also led forth the adorned (daughter) of Pūtakratu's wife [=Dasyave Vr̥ka's sister]
   just as if she belonged to a troop of horses.
5. Agni, the perceptive, has just been perceived, the oblation-conveyor along with his chariot.
   Agni shone with his blazing flame, having his own sun aloft, as the Sun shone in heaven.

VIII.57 (1026) Aśvins

Medhya Kāṇva
4 verses: triṣṭubh

This sequence of verses inviting the Aśvins to the soma sacrifice is unremarkable save for a few features. The first verse explicitly establishes the context as the Third Pressing, which, as we have discussed elsewhere, was probably a recent addition to R̥gvedic ritual. And especially in verse 2 there are insoluble textual problems. Since the verse itself is not terribly interesting in content, the difficulties can safely be left aside here.

1. You two, o gods worthy of the sacrifice, yoked by your age-old purpose, with your chariot
   come here to the powerful (soma?), o Nāsatyas, with your skills. You will drink this Third Pressing here.
2. You two have the gods, the thrice eleven, (called upon); those realest of the real have appeared in front.
   Taking pleasure in our sacrifice, our pressing, drink the soma, o Aśvins, as ones for whom the fire glows.
3. This deed of yours, o Aśvins, is to be wondered at. The bull of heaven, of the dusky realm, of the earth,
   and the thousand chants, which (are performed?) at the quest for cattle—drive up to all those, to drink (the soma).
4. Here is a portion deposited for you, you worthy of the sacrifice; here are hymns, o Nāsatyas—drive up to them.
   Drink the honeyed soma among us. Foster the pious man with your skills.

VIII.58 (1027) "Fragment"

Not mentioned in the Anukramaṇī, so without r̥ṣi attribution
3 verses: triṣṭubh

This fragment of three verses is not transmitted as a unity in the khila collections, with verses 1–2 and 3 located separately. Verse 3 in fact appears to belong to the

Aśvin hymn VIII.57, with which it fits well: the "left-over" soma it mentions is a standard offering in the Third Pressing treated in VIII.57.

As for the other two verses, Geldner memorably characterizes verse 1 as a riddle without an answer, and verse 2 as an answer without a preceding riddle. This seems persuasive, and the two verses may have been secondarily connected because of the *bahudhā́* "in many forms, in many ways" that appears in the middle of the first pāda of each verse. Proferes argues (2007: 56), again persuasively, that verse 1 inquires about the compact or agreement between the Sacrificer and the priests that is ritually dramatized in the later śrauta system in the ritual of the Tānūnaptra, in which a formal alliance is created among these participants, and he suggests that this verse is a precursor of that later ceremony. Verse 2, on the other hand, has been taken, since Sāyaṇa, as the answer to the riddle posed in X.88.18ab "How many fires and how many suns? How many dawns, and how many waters?" and the tone of this verse is in harmony with the philosophical speculation characteristic of such Xth Maṇḍala hymns.

1. This sacrifice here, which the priests, configuring it in many ways, carry out with one mind,
   and the Brahman who was yoked as reciter—what is the Sacrificer's compact there [=with them]?
2. Just one fire is kindled in many forms; just one sun has projected through all.
   Just one dawn radiates over this whole (world). In truth just One has developed into this whole (world).
3. Your light-filled, three-wheeled, well-naved chariot, providing a beacon, easy to sit in, bringing abundant valuables,
   at whose yoking (Dawn) of bright bounties is born—that I call upon, for you two to drink the "left-over" (soma).

VIII.59 (1028) Indra and Varuṇa

Suparṇa Kāṇva
7 verses: jagatī

This last Vālakhilya hymn presents a number of uncertainties in transmission, and so it is difficult to know whether its sometimes awkward phrasing belonged to the original poem or is the result of flawed transmission. In contrast, the hymn has a rather tight structure, with an apparent omphalos: verses 3 and 5 have a number of lexical correspondences, and in particular they both announce a truth (*satyám*). These correspondences form a ring that defines verse 4, the central verse of the hymn, as the omphalos, as well as containing the "truth" proclaimed in the adjacent verses. All three verses refer to a group, or groups, of seven in riddling fashion. At least the female "seven" in verses 3 and 4—seven voices, seven sisters—can be

identified as the soma-purifying waters, conceived of as the "seven rivers" of Vedic mythology. (They are called "voices" because of the noise they make, just as one of the words for "river," *nadī́*, is derived from the root *nad* "roar," an etymology explicitly recognized by Vedic speakers.) The three heptads of verse 5 may refer to the same streams, multiplied, or may evoke the number of gifts Indra and Varuṇa should bestow in response.

The omphalos verse is left incomplete: the poet urges the two gods to "establish . . . " (*dhattam* [if this is the correct reading, as we think]) but does not specify the object desired. This truncated wish returns at the end of the hymn, however. The final verse contains two occurrences of this same verb, with a plethora of objects. This completion of the unfinished expression of verse 4 may be seen as another example of "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006).

Indra and Varuṇa do not form a natural pair, and it is not surprising that very few hymns are dedicated to the two alone (I.17, IV.41–42, VI.68, VII.82–85, and a tr̥ca in III.62 [1–3]). In the more prominent hymns to both divinities, especially the justly celebrated IV.42, their contrastive qualities, especially their different types of kingship, are highlighted. Here by contrast the two gods are essentially featureless (the possible exception is 2cd), their only activities being to accept the soma offering and give prosperity to the sacrificers in return. In fact, vocabulary appropriate to a more standard pair of gods, the Aśvins, is adapted here, especially the vocative "you two lords of beauty" (*śubhas patī*), a common epithet otherwise confined to the Aśvins.

1. These portions here run to you two, Indra and Varuṇa; run forth to you
   when the (soma-drinks) are pressed, for your great (generosity?).
   At every sacrifice you bustle toward the pressings, when you do your best
   for the sacrificer who presses (soma).
2. The plants and waters, offering tribute to these two, have reached
   greatness, o Indra and Varuṇa—
   the two who run on the far side of dusky space, at the far limit of their
   road, the two of whom no non-god vaunts himself as their rival.
3. This is really true, Indra and Varuṇa: the seven "voices" of Kr̥śa milk out
   a wave of honey for you two.
   With these, you lords of beauty, help the pious man who, undeceivable,
   keeps watch over you with his thoughts.
4. The ghee-sprinkling companions of soma, possessing lively drops, the
   seven sisters in the seat of truth,
   who are ghee-dripping for you two, Indra and Varuṇa—with these
   establish . . . . Do your best for the sacrificer.
5. We have proclaimed a true thing for great good fortune, have proclaimed
   greatness and Indrian strength for the two vibrant ones.
   Help us who drip ghee, o Indra and Varuṇa, with three groups of seven,
   you lords of beauty.

6. O Indra and Varuṇa, in that you in the beginning gave to the seers inspired thought, the thinking of speech, what is heard—
   the insightful (seers) launched these as poems as they stretched out the sacrifice. I looked upon them with fervor.
7. Indra and Varuṇa, establish undistracted benevolence and thriving of wealth among the sacrificers.
   Establish offspring, prosperity, and development among us. Lengthen our lifetime for long life.

The grouping of the VIIIth Maṇḍala hymns that follow the Vālakhilya hymns (60–103) is not as clear as in the earlier section of the maṇḍala, in great part because the poets are far less likely to identify themselves. Nonetheless, the order of deities and the number of verses per hymn provide good evidence. We follow Oldenberg's (1888: 216–18) proposed structure.

The next collection of hymns (VIII.60–66) is ascribed to Pragātha and several of his sons. All but the first are dedicated to Indra.

VIII.60 (669) Agni

Bharga Pragātha
20 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

The focus throughout most of this hymn is Agni in his sacrificial role, a theme strongly established in the first five verses, and in his close relationship to the household and clan. As a consequence of this latter relationship he also appears as the protector of those entities against external threats: see verses 6–10, 12–14, and especially the two final verses 19–20. The usual prayers for wealth and aid are not absent, however.

1. Agni, drive here with your fires: we would choose you as our Hotar.
   Let the oblation-bearing (ladle), held forth, anoint you, the best sacrificer, for you to sit upon the ritual grass,
2. For the ladles are moving toward you at the ceremony, o son of strength, o Aṅgiras.
   We supplicate the child of nourishment, ghee-haired Agni, foremost at the sacrifices.

3. O Agni, pure one, you are the sage poet and ritual expert, the Hotar who receives (the command) "sacrifice!"—
   delightful, the best sacrificer, to be invoked at the ceremonies by our inspired poets with their thoughts, o blazing one.
4. Without deception, convey the eager gods here for them to pursue (the offerings), o youngest one, untiring.

Come here to the well-placed pleasing offerings, o good one. Take delight as you are spurred on [/set in place] by our insights.

5. Just you, of great extent, are the entruthed sage poet, o guardian Agni.
Just you do the inspired poets and the ritual experts seek to attract here, o you who shine while being kindled.
6. Blaze bright, brightest blazing one; shine joy for the clan. Give to the praiser. You are great!
Let my patrons, overpowering their rivals and endowed with good fires, be under the shelter of the gods.

7. Just as you incinerate the brushwood grown thick on the ground, o Agni,
in the same way burn whoever stalks (us), lying to us and ill-intentioned, o you who deploy the might of alliance.
8. Do not make us subject to a mortal who is a cheat possessed of demonic power, nor to one who utters evil.
O youngest one, protect us with your protectors that are unfailing, overwhelming, but kindly.

9. Protect us with one, Agni, and protect us with a second.
Protect us with three hymns, o lord of nourishments; protect us with four, o good one.
10. Protect us from every hostile demon. Ever further us when prizes (are at stake),
for we approach just you, the one nearest to the divine assemblage and our friend, for strengthening.

11. (Bring) here to us praiseworthy wealth that strengthens vital force, o pure Agni,
and give it to us, o apportioner—(wealth) much craved and very glorious—with your good guidance—
12. (Wealth) with which we will vanquish in battles those who vaunt themselves, as we overcome the aims of the stranger.
Strengthen us because of our pleasing offering, o you who have the goods of skill. Quicken our insights so they find goods.

13. Like a bull sharpening his horns, shaking them again and again, is Agni.
His sharp jaws are not to be withstood: well fanged is the young (son) of strength.
14. For your fangs are not to be withstood when you spread yourself out, o bullish Agni.
Make our oblation well poured, o Hotar. Win for us many things worth choosing.

15. You lie in the pieces of wood and in your two mothers [=kindling sticks]; the mortals kindle you.
 Tireless, you convey the oblations of him who makes oblation. Right after that you shine [/rule] among the gods.
16. The seven Hotars reverently invoke just you, o Agni, the unabashed one displaying great abandon.
 You split apart the rock with your heat and your flame. Agni, stand out beyond the peoples.

17. Agni after Agni, not one poor, would we invoke for you [=the assembled clans]—we with our ritual grass twisted,
 with our pleasing offerings set in place—Agni here in each and every (clan), the Hotar of the settled domains.
18. He [=singer?] keeps company with your intention in the shelter made of good melody. O perceptive Agni, the *pieces of wood are for you.
 By impulsion bring here to us the prize of many forms to be nearest to us, for our aid.

19. O Agni, o singer and god, you are the clanlord who burns the demons,
 the houselord who doesn't go abroad; you are great—the protector from heaven, but devoted to the house.
20. Let demonic power not enter into us, nor the sorcery of those who deploy sorcery, o you who have the goods of the glowing one [=Pūṣan].
 Keep thirst and hunger away, far beyond the pasture-lands; o Agni, keep away those who deploy demonic power.

VIII.61 (670) Indra

Bharga Pragātha
18 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn begins with the invitation to soma (vss. 1–3), but the poet soon turns his attention to the gifts Indra will bestow, a theme that dominates the rest of the first half of the hymn (through vs. 8). The sacrificial context returns at this point, and in verses 11–12 the sacrificers seek to harness Indra as their comrade, whose powers they wish to marshal for their protection against hostile forces (see esp. vss. 13, 15–18).

The syntax is fairly straightforward, but there are a number of rare words and hapaxes (e.g., the last two words of vs. 9) and pleasing verbal plays. The poet especially likes variable repetition (of the type "unassailable assailant" vs. 3).

1. If Indra nearby will hear this twofold speech of ours,
 the most powerful benefactor will come here to the soma-drinking by reason of our fully focused insight.

2. For the two Holy Places [=Heaven and Earth] fashioned the bull as sovereign king, for strength.
   And as the first among the highest you take your seat, for your mind has desire for soma.

3. Drench yourself in the pressed stalk, o Indra who bring many goods,
   for we know you, o master of the fallow bays, as victorious in battles, as the unassailable assailant.
4. You whose reality cannot be confounded, o bounteous Indra, it will be just as you wish according to your intention.
   Might we win the prize with your help, o you of fair lips, as we go quickly, o master of the stones.

5. Exert your ability, o master of ability, o Indra, through all your help,
   for we follow after you who are like Bhaga, glorious and finding goods, o champion.
6. As multiplicity yourself, you are a multiplier of horseflesh, of cattle; you are a golden wellspring, o god,
   for no one will shun a gift in your (control). Whatever I beg for, bring that here.

7. Come on and find fortune, to give goods to the attentive man.
   Boil up and over, generous one, for the seeking of cattle, up and over for the seeking of horseflesh, Indra.
8. You are ready to give many thousands and hundreds of herds.
   We of inspired speech have brought the stronghold-splitter here, singing Indra for his help.

9. If without inspiration or if inspired, someone has dedicated his speech to you, Indra,
   he will reach elation in devotion to you—o you of a hundred resolves, whose battle-fury is upfront, whose (motto is) "I shall win!"
10. The strong-armed stronghold-splitter who causes destruction—if he will hear my call,
    we, seeking goods, will call upon the goods-lord of a hundred resolves, upon Indra, with songs of praise.

11. Let us not be regarded as evil, or stingy, or greedy,
    if just now we will make Indra, the bull, into our companion at the pressing.
12. We have yoked the strong one, victorious in battles, the undeceivable one who wants what he's owed.
    The winner, the best charioteer recognizes a prizewinning (racehorse), even when it's a blur—which is just the one he will attain.

13. Whatever we are afraid of, Indra, make us unafraid of that.
    Bounteous one, exert your ability then through your help for us. Smash away hatreds, away slights.
14. For you, lord of largesse, are (lord) of great largesse and of the dwelling place of him who does honor.
    We, who have pressed (the soma), invoke you, bounteous Indra, who long for songs.

15. Indra, spy and Vṛtra-smasher, protector from afar, is worth our choosing.
    He will guard the last one of us and the midmost. Let him protect us from behind and from in front.
16. Protect us from behind, from beneath, from above, from in front, from everywhere, Indra.
    Put far away from us fear of the gods, far away the ungodly missiles.

17. Today after today, tomorrow after tomorrow, rescue us, o Indra—and in the future.
    Through all the days, by day and by night, you will guard our singers, o lord of settlements.
18. Shattering champion, bounteous patron of powerful bounty, equipped for heroic action—
    o you of a hundred resolves, both your arms are bulls, which hold fast to the mace.

VIII.62 (671) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: paṅkti, except bṛhatī 7–9, arranged in tṛcas

A pleasantly limpid praise of Indra, which emphasizes Indra's pleasure in praise and sacrifice (e.g., vss. 1, 4, 6) and the usual reciprocal benefits exchanged between the god and his worshipers. The relationship between Indra and the sacrificers seems to become stronger as the hymn progresses, its growth tracked through the word "yoke." In the early verses of the hymn Indra is isolated in his accomplishments: in verse 2 he is said to be "without yokemate" and to accomplish his deeds alone; in verse 3 he is about to win even with an unsatisfactory horse. But after he comes to the sacrifice, the exchange relationship between worshiper and god comes to the fore (vs. 5) and already in verse 6 the poet announces that Indra makes the soma-offerer his partner and "yokemate." By the penultimate verse (11) the poet himself, in the first person, proposes that the god and the mortal "yoke ourselves together," to achieve the winnings Indra was on the point of winning alone in verse 3. The poet somewhat hubristically claims that any enemy will yield to "us two," implicitly claiming a kind of equality between the man and the most powerful of gods.

The final verse, as often, is a summary, and it seems to establish the truth value of the whole preceding hymn, as well as the précis given in the last half-verse. The refrain found in every verse establishes the cheerful tone from the start.

1. Present a praise invocation to him so that he will find pleasure.
   By solemn recitations the providers of soma increase the great vitality of Indra.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
2. Without yokemate, without equal among superior men, irrepressible—he alone
   has grown strong over the many peoples, over all created things, with his might.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
3. He of lively gifts is on the point of winning, even with a steed that's not spurred on.
   That of yours should be proclaimed, Indra, when you are going to perform heroic deeds.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

4. Drive here! We shall make strengthening sacred formulations for you, Indra,
   in which you will delight, you strongest one. There is something auspicious here for one who seeks fame.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
5. Bold also is the mind of (you,) the bold, o Indra, when you act
   for the man who renders service with sharp soma drops, who attends with homages.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
6. He who is equal to song gazes down on the (soma-)springs like a man into wells.
   Finding pleasure, he makes a partner and yokemate of the skillful soma-bearer.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

7. All the gods conceded heroism and resolve to you.
   You became the herdsman of all, o you praised by many.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
8. I sing that utmost strength of yours, Indra, for the divine assembly,
   that you smash Vṛtra with your might, o lord of ability.
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
9. He will make those who marvel at him into festive assemblies, as it were, throughout the generations of men.
   Indra knows his own distinctive sign: he is famed (for it).
   – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

10. They have increased your new-born strength, Indra, increased you and your resolve
    many times, o you of many cows, under your shelter, bounteous one.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
11. I and you, o Vṛtra-smasher—let us two yoke ourselves together for winnings.
    Even a hostile man, o master of the stones, will yield to the two of us, o champion.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.
12. This is really true—and thus we shall praise this Indra—not false:
    he is the great weapon of death for the man who does not press soma, but many are his lights for the man who does press.
    – Auspicious are the gifts of Indra.

VIII.63 (672) Indra (except the Gods 12)

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 5, 7 and triṣṭubh 12, arranged in tṛcas.

Compared to the simple diction of the last hymn, this one seems deliberately stiff and full of labored expressions whose decoding slows the pace of the hymn, perhaps on purpose. The hymn's structure, by contrast, is rather simple and follows a straightforward trajectory, with each of the four tṛcas expressing a different theme.

The hymn opens with a mysterious figure, the "tracker," who is smeared or anointed with mental constructs—intentions and insights—by two different agents, who can be plausibly identified as the gods and Manu in his role as father of mankind and the first sacrificer. This liminal figure, the tracker, is most likely a ritual mediator between the divine and the human, and Agni makes the most sense as the referent. The second verse confirms the ritual setting, and in the third verse Indra makes his first appearance, in his role as opener of the Vala cave. This mythological reference calls dawn to mind, and suggests the time of the current sacrifice. Thus, the first tṛca establishes the scene as the Morning Pressing.

The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) then calls Indra to that sacrifice; each verse contains the word *arká* "chant." In the third tṛca (vss. 7–10) various deeds of Indra are celebrated, especially his defeat of enemies for the Five Peoples (vs. 7) and his involvement, with Viṣṇu, in the killing of the Emuṣa boar (vs. 9), a myth which is a specialty of this part of Maṇḍala VIII (VIII.69.14–15; 77.1–2, 6–8, 10–11; 96.2). Here only the preliminaries, in which a rice porridge is fetched by Viṣṇu to nourish Indra, are treated. The middle verse 8 mentions Indra's manly deeds in general, but also contains the phrase "you furthered the turning of the wheel" (*cakrásya*

vartaním), which reminds us of the later designation *cakra-vartin* "turner of the wheel" for a universal monarch. The last tṛca (vss. 10–12) introduces the Maruts and finally the gods in general as associates of Indra and calls on all of them for help.

1. The tracker [=Agni?], stationed in front, has been smeared with the intentions of the great ones [=gods],
   he on whose doors father Manu smeared insightful thoughts to the gods.
2. The stones with soma on their backs have sat up, as if to the measure of heaven.
   The solemn words and sacred formulations are now to be recited.
3. Indra, knowing how, uncovered the cows for the Aṅgirases.
   That manly act of his is to be praised.

4. As of old, let Indra, strengthener of poets, fortifier of speech,
   the kindly one, come among us for help at the pouring of our chant.
5. And therefore, following the intention of your will, those eager to sacrifice (have cried out) "hail!";
   their chants have cried out to (you), who are swollen with strength, Indra, to give of the cowpen.
6. All heroic deeds, both done and to be done, are in Indra,
   whom the chants know as the very ceremony itself.

7. When cries were sent surging to Indra by the clan belonging to the Five Peoples,
   through the power of their inspiration, through the power of his measure he laid the strangers low. He is peaceful dwelling.
8. Here is the praise that follows you: you did these manly deeds;
   you furthered the turning of the wheel.
9. (Viṣṇu) strode widely to the rice porridge for this bull to live on.
   (Indra) took it, as cattle do barley.

10. Seeking help as we present this (praise hymn), through you (all) might we have skill as our father
    for the strengthening of the one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra].
11. Yes indeed! through our chanters we cry out again and again for your establishment according to the ritual sequence, o champion.
    Let us conquer with you as our yokemate, Indra.
12. For us are the Rudras [=Maruts] in their profusion and the mountains of one accord at the Vṛtra-smashing, where the call is "Carry (the day)!"
    The steadfast one who has been established for the praiser and presser—with him, Indra, as their chief let the gods help us.

VIII.64 (673) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

A hymn artful in its extreme simplicity. Its diction, its syntax, and its structure are all straightforward. It consists of four tr̥cas. The first (vss. 1–3) begs Indra for gifts and aid against enemies and celebrates his preeminence. The second (vss. 4–6) calls him to the sacrifice. The third (vss. 7–9) consists of rhetorical questions about Indra's whereabouts and the possibility of his consorting with other sacrificers. The final one (vss. 10–12) presents him with the just-pressed soma.

The transparency of the hymn is produced in great part by its syntax: many of the verses contain several short, generally pāda-length sentences (vs. 1 is a typical example), and more extreme concision is encountered in the abrupt series of imperatives "come! run! drink!" in the last tr̥ca (vss. 10c and 12c; cf. also 4a). Even when the sentence extends beyond the pāda, it often deploys simple parallel constituents across two pādas (e.g., vss. 3ab, 6ab). There is also no overt subordination in the hymn (unless we count the *nahí* ["for not"] clause of 2c). There are almost no past tenses (only in 5c [perfect] and 9a [aorist]); the finite verb forms are otherwise limited to imperatives, indicative presents, and one presential perfect (8c).

The sentiments expressed and the vocabulary are likewise uncomplex and standard. Only the penultimate verse (11), with its apparent references to locales for finding soma, causes any interpretive problems.

1. Let the praises whip you up. Show your generosity, o master of the stones.
   Strike down the haters of sacred formulations.
2. With your foot stamp down the ungenerous niggards. You are great,
   for no one is equal to you.
3. You are master of the pressed soma-drops, and you, Indra, of the
      unpressed ones.
   You are the king of the peoples.

4. Come here! Go forth—your dwelling is in heaven—as you take heed of
      the separate communities.
   You fill both worlds.
5. This very mountain, this peak, which holds a hundred, a
      thousand (cows),
   did you shatter apart for your praisers.
6. We by day at the pressing and we by night call upon you:
   fulfill our desire!

7. Where is this young, strong-necked bull who cannot be bowed?
   Who is the formulator who serves him?
8. To whose pressing does the bull, relishing it, descend?
   Who finds their pleasure in Indra?

9. Whom have your gifts accompanied, whom have masses of brave men, o Vṛtra-smasher.
   Who at the recitation is closest (to you)?

10. This soma here is being pressed for you amid the people of Manu, among the Pūrus.
    Of that—come! run!—drink!
11. Here is your dear (soma) in the reed-filled (pond?), here in the Suṣomā (River?)
    the most invigorating in the foamy (lake?).
12. (Drink) this delightful one today for (you to show) great generosity, for thrilling invigoration—
    come to it, Indra! run! drink!

VIII.65 (674) Indra

Pragātha Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn is at least superficially a twin to the last one: it is attributed to the same poet, consists of the same number of verses, and is in the same meter. And indeed it shows important similarities to VIII.64. It, too, tends to short, often pāda-length, syntactic units and to balanced parallel constituents (e.g., 2a, c, 6ab), and there are even agreements in wording: the abrupt verse-final imperative "drink!" of VIII.64.10 and 12 is repeated in 65.5 and 8 (with the former also containing *éhi* "come!" like the examples in VIII.64), and "we call upon" appears in the same verse (6) in the same position in both hymns.

However, VIII.65 introduces some complications absent from VIII.64. Unlike 64, which had no subordination at all, 65 begins with a subordinating conjunction (*yád*), which occurs three times in the first two verses, and verse 2 finds its main clause only in verse 3. (See also vs. 7.) Though present indicatives and imperatives predominate, the range of verbal forms is somewhat widened as well, with injunctives (9b, 10c), aorists (8b, 12c), a subjunctive (2b), a preterital perfect (probably, 11c), and a number of dative infinitives, as well as two of the much discussed *-ṣé* forms (5a).

The diction can be more resistant than that of VIII.64, as in verse 2 where the choices given to Indra are puzzling. Are these places (as in the also puzzling 64.11) or sources of exhilaration, and are there two choices or three? What do the opaque phrases, especially "the sea of the stalk," refer to?

Like VIII.64 this hymn consists of four tṛcas. The last (vss. 10–12) is clearly defined as a dānastuti. The other three are not thematically differentiated. They all call on Indra to attend our sacrifice, and the major concern running throughout is that rival sacrificers are competing with us for his presence (e.g., vss. 1, 2, 7, 9). These first three tṛcas, before the dānastuti, display ring composition: the command

"drive here straightaway" (*ā́ yāhi tū́yam)* in 1c is echoed in 9b "come here straightaway" (*tū́yam ā́ gahi*).

1. When, Indra, you are being called forward or back, upward or down by men,
   drive here straightaway with your swift (horses).
2. Whether you will bring yourself to exhilaration on the outpouring of heaven in the presence of Svarṇara,
   or on the sea of the stalk,
3. I call you here with songs, you great and broad, like a cow to give sustenance,
   and to drink of the soma, Indra.

4. Your greatness, Indra, your grandeur, god—let your fallow bays,
   bearing it, carry it here on your chariot.
5. Indra, you are to be hymned and praised: great, powerful, performing the master's part.
   Come to our pressed soma! Drink!
6. We, who have pressed soma and have a pleasing offering, call you
   to take your seat here upon this our ritual grass.

7. Even though you are the support common to each and every one, Indra,
   we summon you to us.
8. Here is the somian honey for you—the men have milked it out with stones.
   Finding enjoyment, Indra, drink it!
9. Look beyond all the strangers who are also attentive to poetic inspiration. Come here straightaway.
   Place lofty fame in us.

10. The king is a giver to me—of dappled cows (with horns) wrapped in gold.
    Let the bounteous patron not suffer harm, o gods.
11. On top of the thousand dappled cows, I took glistening, lofty, wide,
    gleaming gold.
12. The descendants of Durgaha, very generous with a thousand for me,
    have made fame for themselves among the gods.

VIII.66 (675) Indra

Kali Prāgātha
15 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas, except anuṣṭubh 15

This hymn of fifteen verses is longer than the Indra hymns that precede it (VIII.62–65, all twelve verses long), and is therefore out of place in the collection. Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.) that it may consist of two hymns (or even three): verses 1–8

and 9–14, with verse 15 appended in a different meter. However, as he also notes (1888: 217), there is no strong internal support for this division, and it may very well be a single hymn.

The invitation to Indra to the soma sacrifice is the primary theme of the hymn. It begins with a call for Indra's help (vs. 1) and continues with descriptions of the sacrificial offerings (vss. 5–8, 11–12), along with the usual hope that Indra will choose our sacrifice over those of others (see esp. vs. 12). The poet remarks particularly on the regular and predictable nature of the sacrifice (vs. 7), and in a striking image in verse 8 suggests to Indra that, since even the apparently uncontrollable wolf follows its own routine, Indra should make it a habit to attend our sacrifice as he has before. The regular nature of the sacrifice has its drawbacks, of course: many others before us and many others around us have performed and continue to perform it, but the poet assures Indra in verse 11 that although he and his comrades are only the most recent among the sacrificers, their formulations are novel and unprecedented (see also vs. 5). The competition between us and the others is emphasized by the numerous occurrences of "many" in this hymn.

Interspersed are verses celebrating Indra's power and his aid to his worshipers (vss. 2–4, 9–10). Not all of this praise is entirely clear, especially that in 3ab, where Indra is identified with two hapaxes, our translations of which are quite provisional. In the final pragātha (vss. 13–14) the poet makes his strongest plea for Indra's help. The final verse (15), in a different meter as noted, is puzzling. It reassures an otherwise unknown group of people, the Kalis, that if they press soma, whatever is threatening them will disappear.

1. With staying power and force (I call for) Indra, finder of goods, for help;
   as (we) sing loftily at the rite with its pressed soma, I call (for him) as if
      for the takings of a decisive victor,
2. Whom neither obdurate nor substantial hindrances will obstruct when
      the fair-lipped one is in the exhilaration of the stalk,
   who, tearing them out for the laboring presser, is the giver of
      praiseworthy (goods) to the singer.

3. The able one, who is a horse's curry comb [?] or who is a golden stake [?],
   he sets the opening of the cattle-pen to shaking—Indra the
      Vr̥tra-smasher.
4. He who casts upward for the pious man the goods assembled by many,
      even when they are buried deep,
   Indra, with mace, fair lips, and fallow bays, will act as he wishes
      according to his will.

5. O champion praised by many, whatever belonging to men you held dear
      even before,
   we assemble that for you, Indra: the sacrifice, the solemn word, and the
      surpassing speech,

6. As well as the soma drinks for your exhilaration, o mace-wielder invoked by many, heaven-ruling soma-drinker.
   For you become the best giver of desirable goods to the creator of sacred formulations, to the presser.

7. At this time yesterday we made the mace-bearer drink here;
   today, in the same way, bring the pressed soma to him. Now attend upon the renowned one.
8. Even a wolf—wild and sheep-stealing—attends to its own patterns.
   Come here, having found pleasure in this praise song of ours with its shimmering insight, Indra.

9. What manly deed of his now remains undone by Indra?
   Indeed, by what fame has the Vr̥tra-smasher not been famed from his birth?
10. Are there great powers that are unassailable by him? What has not been laid low by the Vr̥tra-smasher?
    Indra dominates all the Bekanāṭas who see the day and the Paṇis through his will.

11. (Although we are) the latest of many, we present to you sacred formulations without precedent, o Indra, Vr̥tra-smasher,
    like a present, o mace-bearer invoked by many.
12. For although many are the hopes that call to you, powerfully ranging Indra, and many are your forms of help,
    pass over the pressings of the stranger, good one. Most mighty one, heed my call.

13. We are yours; we inspired poets abide just in you, o Indra,
    for there exists no other dispenser of mercy than you, o bounteous one invoked by many.
14. You—rescue us from this neglect and hunger, from their curse.
    You—because of our brilliant insight, do your best for us with your help, most able one, as the way-finder.

15. Let just your soma be pressed. Kalis, stop fearing:
    this miasma will go away; by itself it will go away.

The next group likely consists of 67–71, though Oldenberg (1888: 217) considers the possibility that VIII.72 belongs here as well. Save for VIII.67 with its fanciful authorial ascription, the rest (68–71) are attributed to Āṅgirasa poets.

VIII.67 (676) Ādityas

Matsya Sāmmada or Mānya Maitrāvaruṇi or many fish caught in a net [*bahavo matsyā jālanaddhāḥ*]
21 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tṛcas

According to the Anukramaṇī, a fish (Matsya) or "many fish caught in a net" are two of the three possible composers of this hymn. Unfortunately, there is not a scrap of evidence in the hymn itself for these intriguing ascriptions. The poet begs the Ādityas and their mother Aditi, who is more prominent in the hymn than in most Āditya hymns (vss. 10–12, 14, 18), for shelter and protection from a range of dangers and enemies and for continued life for ourselves and our progeny.

1. Now we shall beg these rulers, the Ādityas, for help—
 the very merciful ones, (for us) to prevail.
2. Mitra will carry us beyond constraint, and Varuṇa and Aryaman,
 just as the Ādityas know how.
3. For their bright, praiseworthy shield exists for the pious man—
 (the shield) of the Ādityas for the man who does it right.

4. Great is the help of you who are great, o Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.
 We choose your help.
5. Gird us, alive, against the deadly blow, o Ādityas.
 Are you ones who heed the call?
6. Your shield, your shelter that exists for the man who has ritually
 labored and who presses soma—
 with that intercede for us.

7. O gods, does there exist wide (space emerging) from out of constraint?
 Does there exist a treasure for the blameless man,
 o Ādityas, you (whom others') offenses cannot mislead?
8. Let this fetter here not bind us; let it avoid us for our great (good
 fortune?),
 for only Indra is famous for imposing his will.
9. Don't (harm) us with the harm of crooked cheats.
 O gods greedy to help, seize them!

10. And, great goddess Aditi, I entreat you,
 the very merciful, (for us) to prevail.
11. Deliver us, whether we're in the shallows or the deep, from someone
 who wishes to smite us, o you who have powerful sons.
 Let none of our offspring be injured.
12. Make faultless (shelter) for us, o widely spreading (goddess) possessing
 a wide enclosure, (for us) to extend afar
 and for our offspring to live.

13. They who, as heads of the settled peoples, untrickable, self-glorious,
without deceit, guard their commandments—
14. Being such, free us from the mouth of wolves, o Ādityas,
like a thief who's been bound, o Aditi.
15. Let this arrow go away from us, o Ādityas,
away malevolence, without striking us.

16. Because, o Ādityas of good gifts, over and over,
previously and now, we have benefited by your help—
17. Because, o attentive gods, each and every man, even one coming back
from an offense,
do you make to live—
18. *This* is the new (life) for an older (man) that will free us, o Ādityas,
like a bound man from his bondage, o Aditi.

19. We do not have the driving force to leap beyond, Ādityas.
You—have mercy upon us!
20. O Ādityas, let the missile of Vivasvant, the finely made arrow,
not strike us now before old age.
21. O Ādityas, rip apart hostility, apart constraint, apart what is packed
together;
rip malady apart and asunder.

VIII.68 (677) Indra (1–13), Dānastuti of R̥kṣa and Āśvamedha (14–19)

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
19 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, 4, 7, 10. Verses 1–12 arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn falls into two parts. It begins with four tr̥cas (vss. 1–12) dedicated to Indra, each beginning with an anuṣṭubh verse and continuing in gāyatrī; there follows a single appended verse (13) continuing the thought of the previous verse. The final six verses are a dānastuti to a set of patrons whose names and identities are not entirely easy to sort out.

The Indra portion is conventional, with an emphasis on his extreme power and might. The dānastuti is likewise comparatively straightforward compared to others of this genre, with a catalogue of the gifts received and a promise to the patrons, expressed in surprisingly negative terms, that even a man who wishes to insult them will not be able to do so (vs. 19).

1. We will turn you here, like a chariot, for help and favor,
you powerfully ranging one who vanquish through your attack, o Indra,
strongest lord of the settlements.

2. O you of powerful outbursts, of powerful will, you able one whose thought is everywhere,
   you have filled (everywhere) with your greatness,
3. You the great, whose hands with their greatness have encompassed
   the earth-encircling mace of gold.

4. The lord of the unbowable strengths who has domain over all men
   do I call for you, together with his means and help for the separate peoples and their chariots—
5. Him, ever-strengthening, whom men, every man for himself, call on in (contests) whose prize is the sun,
   for dominance and for help,
6. Indra, beyond measure and equal to song, strong, of good generosity,
   holding sway also over goods.

7. Him and him alone, Indra, do I impel to drink, for the sake of his great generosity—
   the dancer who holds sway over the communities, according to the ancient praise that follows him.
8. You whose fellowship no (other) mortal has attained,
   he will not attain your strengths, o you who swell with strength.
9. Aided by you, with you as our yokemate, might we win in our battles
   a great stake in the waters and the sun, o mace-bearer.

10. We implore you with our sacrifices, with our songs, o Indra most longing for songs,
    just as you helped Purumāyya in the prize-contests.
11. You whose fellowship is sweet, whose leadership is sweet, o master of the stones—
    yours is the sacrifice worth tussling over.
12. Make it wide for our own body and our lineage, wide for our dwelling.
    Extend it wide for us to live.

13. As a path wide for our men, wide for our cow, wide for our chariot—
    thus do we consider our pursuit of the gods.

14. Six men having sweet gifts approach me
    two by two, in the excitement of soma.
15. From Indrota I received two silvery ones, from the son of Ṛkṣa two fallow bays,
    and the two chestnuts of the son of Aśvamedha;
16. (Horses) having good chariots from the son of Atithigva, those having good reins from the son of Ṛkṣa,
    and those having good ornaments from the son of Aśvamedha.

17. I gained six (horses), along with brides [?], from the son of Atithigva,
    from Indrota,
    along with Pūtakratu.
18. In the midst of these silvery ones there appeared a ruddy female
    [=Dawn?] along with a bull,
    having good reins and a whip.
19. Never will a mortal seeking to scorn you [=patrons], o you who are kin
    to prizes,
    hold disrepute over you.

VIII.69 (678) Indra (1–10, 13–18), All Gods (11ab), Varuṇa (11cd–12)

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
18 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 4–6, paṅkti 11, 16, bṛhatī 17–18 [2 wrongly identified as uṣṇih by Anukramaṇī]

This often baffling hymn is metrically complex, as the above summary shows, and its metrical patterns do not always coincide with its intricate structure. Although many details remains obscure, the thematic outline of the hymn becomes clearer when that structure has been discerned. In our view, the hymn falls into two halves (vss. 1–9, 10–18), which are exactly parallel. Each consists of two tṛcas (1–6, 10–15), followed by a single verse celebrating the partnership between Indra and the poet (7, 16), and ending with two verses concerning the Priyamedhas' ritual offering to Indra (8–9, 17–18). The parallelism is especially clear in the final three verses of each half: both 7 and 16 contain the dual optative *sacevahi* "might we two become comrades" and concern a journey of a certain number of steps. In both 8–9 and 17–18 the Priyamedhas are explicitly mentioned. They are exhorted to ritual performance in verses 8–9, while in 17–18, as is suitable in hymn-final verses, their performance is summarized. The parallelism between the opening tṛcas of both halves is much freer, though there are rough correspondences.

The relationship between the two tṛcas of the first half is noteworthy. The first tṛca (vss. 1–3) is quite puzzling, with opaque phraseology and uncertain references; the second tṛca (vss. 4–6) seems a double of the first, paraphrasing and explaining it, in a sort of global example of "poetic repair" (Jamison 2006). The second tṛca exhorts the poet to "chant forth" to Indra (vs. 4), and the next two verses describe the preparation of soma for Indra, with the soma drops racing to the milk (conceptualized, as so often, as cows). With this in mind we can approach the first tṛca. In verse 1 the opening phrase "forth, forth" recalls the similar phrase in verse 4 and allows the verb "chant" to be supplied (see also vs. 8). In verse 1 the recipient of what is chanted, the poem, identified as "triṣṭubh refreshment," is clearly Soma ("the drop"), not Indra as in verse 4, but the constructions are parallel. The poem is

then the subject of the second half of the verse, as it seeks to win something unspecified. In our opinion the subject of verse 2 is this same poem, taking aim at Soma (the "roaring bull") among the cows, who represent the milk-mixture. In verse 3 the soma mixture is prepared for Indra, and, it seems, for the rest of the gods.

This matched pair of triplets is followed by the remarkable verse 7, in which the poet proposes a partnership between himself and Indra, a partnership to be sealed by the symbolic seven steps that in the later marriage ceremony make a marriage legal after the bride and groom have taken them, and that already in the R̥gveda (X.8.4) are the symbolic act creating a contract or alliance. The phrase "the seven(th) step of the comrade" seems to refer to this ceremonial institution. In order to make this alliance the poet and Indra go to Indra's own home and drink the soma together, having made the journey over the surface of the sea of soma (in our view, though others consider this to be a reference to the sun). The relationship between poet and god is thus a surprisingly intimate one, reminiscent of that between the poet Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa in VII.86–89, especially the verses describing their former comradeship with grammatical constructions and lexicon very similar to those here (VII.88.3–5). It is also similar to nearby VIII.62.11, where the poet again proposes that he and Indra yoke themselves together. The first half of the hymn is then brought to a close by the aforementioned exhortation to the Priyamedhas to chant to Indra (vs. 8), with a tantalizing glimpse of what appear to be three musical instruments accompanying them (vs. 9).

The two tr̥cas opening the second half of the hymn (vss. 10–15) reverse the order of obscurity. The first (vss. 10–12) is relatively straightforward and, at least to begin with, matches material in the first half: the speckled cows giving milk for the soma mixture in verse 10 remind us of the dappled cows and their milk in verse 3 (also 5–6), and Indra and other gods partake of the soma in verse 11, though the presence and role of Varuṇa in verses 11–12 are somewhat puzzling. However, it is the next tr̥ca (vss. 13–15) that almost defeats the interpreter, especially verse 13. There is no agreement even on what god (or gods) the verse concerns, much less on what the actions in question are and whether the verse is a self-contained syntactic unit. We are inclined to take the verse as a suite of relative clauses referring to Indra, who is triumphantly proclaimed in verse 14. The second half of verse 14 alludes to the Emuṣa myth (also treated in VIII.77, etc.), in which, it seems, Indra as a boy slew a boar named Emuṣa by shooting through a mountain, and brought (or Viṣṇu brought him) a rice porridge and some buffalo (which had been protected by the boar?) from the mountain. The next verse (15) most likely also concerns this myth, or it may refer to another of Indra's boyhood deeds. There are numerous difficulties in these three verses, and our translation is only provisional.

The following verse (16) brings us back to the present, with the poet's second proposition of fellowship to Indra, again in the course of a journey. And the final two verses (17–18) summarize the Priyamedhas' ritual efforts and pronounces them even better than before.

We cannot claim to have settled the many issues of this hymn, but the structure outlined above does give a context in which to evaluate the difficulties that remain.

1. Forth, (chant) forth your triṣṭubh refreshment to the drop that invigorates heroes.
   With your visionary thought and with plenitude it is seeking to win, in order to gain wisdom.
2. You take aim at the roaring bull among your moist [=willing] females and at the roaring bull among the females who keep hanging back,
   at the lord of your prized milk-cows.
3. These dappled cows, which give the sweetening milk, prepare the soma for him [=Indra].
   At its birth the clans of the gods are in the three luminous realms of heaven.

4. Chant forth with a song to the lord of cows, to Indra, in the way that is known,
   to the son of the real, the master of settlements.
5. The tawny (soma-drops) have been let loose at the ruddy (cows) upon the ritual grass,
   where we will bellow out together.
6. The cows have milked out the milk-mixture for Indra, the honey for the mace-bearer,
   since he found them in the remote place.

7. As we two, Indra and (I), go up to his home along the surface of the coppery (soma),
   having drunk of the honey three times, might we two become comrades at the seven(th) step of the comrade.

8. Chant! Chant forth! Chant, o Priyamedhas!
   Let your little sons chant, and you—chant boldly as if against a fortress.
9. The Gargara(-instrument) will gurgle downward, the Godhā(-vīṇā) will keep resounding all around,
   and the Piṅgā(-string) will keep quivering all around. The sacred formulation is offered up to Indra.

10. When the speckled (cows), who yield good milk and never kick, fly here,
    take hold of the kicking soma for Indra to drink.
11. Indra has drunk; Agni has drunk. All the gods have become exhilarated.
    Varuṇa will settle here, too. The waters have bellowed out to him, as (cows) that share their young do to their calf.

12. You are well-provided with gods, Varuṇa—you through whose gullet the seven rivers
    stream, as through a tube that provides easy flow.

13. He who made the paired, well-yoked horses leap for the pious man,
    (who is) their swooping leader—and just this is the marvel—who was set loose as the very measure (of heaven)—
14. Just he is solemnly proclaimed as the able one, as Indra, beyond all hatreds.
    The lad ripped (out) the rice porridge that was cooking far away on the mountain.
15. Like a teeny-tiny wee little boy, he mounted his new chariot.
    He cooked the wild buffalo of prodigious will for his father and mother.

16. You fair-lipped houselord, mount your golden chariot.
    Then we two might become comrades along the heavenly, ruddy (path) with a thousand steps,
    faultless and leading to well-being.

17. Bringing homage, they reverently approach him, their sovereign king, just so.
    Just this is his well-set goal when they turn him here to come and to give.
18. Following the (custom) of their ancient house, the Priyamedhas
    with twisted ritual grass, with their pleasing offering set in place, have equaled their previous presentation.

VIII.70 (679) Indra

Puruhanman Āṅgirasa
15 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī arranged in pragāthas 1–6; br̥hatī arranged in tr̥cas 7–12; uṣṇih 13, anuṣṭubh 14, puraüṣṇih 15

Another metrically complex hymn. The first six verses consist of three pragāthas in br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, the next six (7–12) of two tr̥cas in br̥hatī, and the last three (13–15) of verses in three different meters, but all consisting of eight syllable or a mixture of eight and twelve syllable lines, like the br̥hatī/satobr̥hatī verses before them.

The thematic divisions correspond well with these metrical divisions. The first six verses are extravagant praise of Indra's unequalled power. Having flattered him with his praise, the poet occupies the tr̥ca portion with the usual requests for Indra to exercise his generosity and, more strikingly, for him to punish mortals who do not worship him and do not follow the Ārya way, with the

culminating verse 11 listing the numerous ways in which this evil man can deviate from the proper path. One of the stylistic features especially of the tṛca section (but see also vs. 4) is the tendency for the final word or words of the c and d pādas to match (4cd, 7cd, 8cd, 11cd, 12cd; see also 9a+d), and there are other verse-internal echoes.

The final three verses (13–15) are a dānastuti of Śara Śauradevya, or rather what we might term an anti-dānastuti or, technically, a satire. The first of these verses (13) poses a rhetorical question that seems to promise lavish praise to come, but the poet takes this back in verse 14 with another rhetorical question: will you really receive praise for a gift that consists of calves doled out in miserly fashion? The final verse specifies just how miserly: a single calf for three poets. In these verses the standard vocabulary of generosity (benefactor, patron, bounteous one) is deployed sarcastically, and the poet cleverly gives his criticism a gloss of praise.

For an analysis of the phonetic and grammatical features of the entire hymn, see Watkins (1995: 184–87).

1. He who is king of the separate peoples, a driver with chariots, rich,
   an overcomer in all battles, who is sung as the preeminent smasher of
   Vṛtra—
2. Beautify that Indra, o Puruhanman, for his help, him whose (mace) is
   once again in (the hand of) the apportioner:
   the mace, lovely to see, has been put back into his hand, like the great
   sun into heaven.

3. No one will catch up with him who by his (ritual?) action created an ever
   strengthening one
   like Indra, welcomed with sacrifices by all, ingenious, unassailable but of
   assailing might,
4. Invincible, mighty, and victorious in battles, in whose (control) are the
   great, wide-expanding (waters?).
   While he was being born, the milk-cows kept bellowing in unison; the
   heavens and earths kept bellowing.

5. Since a hundred heavens and a hundred earths could be yours, Indra,
   a thousand suns were not equal to you when you were just born, o
   mace-bearer, nor were the two world-halves.
6. You have filled all things with your bullish greatness, bull, and with your
   strength, strongest one.
   Help us to a pen full of cattle with your bright help, bounteous
   mace-bearer.

7. A godless mortal shall not acquire refreshment, o long-lived one!
   Indra, who will yoke his two steeds that win dappled cows, who will yoke
   his two fallow bays—

8. (Call upon) him to give to you—Indra, the conqueror to be greatly magnified,
   who is to be called upon at the fords and in foreign parts, who is to be called upon at the prize-contests.
9. Shape us up for your great generosity, o good one, champion—
   (shape us) up for your great giving of bounty, bounteous one; (shape us) up for great fame, Indra.

10. You are the one who seeks the truth for us, Indra. You find no satisfaction in him who reviles you.
    Gird yourself in between your thighs, o you of mighty manliness. Jab down the Dāsa with your blows.
11. The man who follows other commandments, who is no son of Manu, no sacrificer, no devotee of the gods—
    him should your own comrade, the mountain [=mace?], send tumbling down; the mountain (should send down) the Dasyu for easy smiting.
12. O strongest Indra, grab a handful of these (cows), o most capacious one, to give to us,
    like a handful of roasted grains, being disposed toward us. Grab two, being disposed toward us.

13. O comrades, find the resolve: how shall we bring to success our invocatory praise of Śara,
    who is a benefactor, a patron without restraint?
14. Will you be praised in any way by many seers provided with ritual grass,
    Śara, if you will hand over your calves in just this way, one by one?
15. The bounteous son of Śūradeva, having grabbed hold of its ear, led a calf here to us three,
    a patron (leading) a nanny-goat to give suck (to three kids).

VIII.71 (680) Agni

Sudīti Āṅgirasa and/or Purumīḷha Āṅgirasa
15 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tr̥cas 1–9; br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī arranged in pragāthas 10–15

This, the last hymn of the small Āṅgirasa collection VIII.67–71, falls into two parts, defined by meter: verse 1–9 in gāyatrī tr̥cas and 10–15 in br̥hatī/satobr̥hatī pragāthas. As Oldenberg suggested (1888: 217; *Noten* ad loc.), it could be made up of two separate hymns, and the lack of thematic continuity in fact favors this division, though there is some shared vocabulary. The first names of the two alternative poets suggested by the Anukramaṇī were extracted from verse 14.

The first nine verses beg Agni's protection for the pious worshiper from all manner of malign and threatening forces, particularly those of other humans. It is

Agni's power as a god that is emphasized, with mortals hostile or devout subject to this superior divine power, to be punished or rewarded, as they deserve.

The second part of the hymn (vss. 10–15) is dominated by a stylistic pattern: Agni in the accusative case is the goal of sacrificial actions and words throughout this section. In verse 10 he is not named, but an epithet in the accusative is found in every pāda of the verse. His name (*agním*) begins the next verse (11a), and in the subsequent verses it is featured again and again. Verse 12 contains five occurrences of *agním*, one beginning every pāda, plus one in the middle of the third. Verse 13 varies the pattern by beginning with a nominative form of the name, but the second half-verse returns to the initial accusative, which continues through the subsequent verses: three examples of initial *agním* in verse 14 (pādas a, c, d), two in the final verse (15a, b). The interplay between our ritual devotion and prayers and his gifts and aid is the topic of this section, but the content is far less noticeable than the form.

1. O Agni, protect us by your great powers from all hostility
   and from mortal hatred.
2. For no human fury is master of you (gods), o (Agni), born dear.
   Just you are the protector of the earth.
3. O child of nourishment, of fortunate flame, along with all the gods
   give us wealth consisting of all desirable things.

4. Hostilities do not keep that mortal away from wealth, o Agni,
   the pious one whom you safeguard.
5. Whom you impel toward the stakes at the winning of the
      wisdom—o Agni, inspired poet—
   he by your help will arrive at cows.
6. (Give) wealth consisting of many heroes to the pious mortal.
   Lead us forth to a better state.

7. Deliver us: do not hand us over to one who wishes evil, o Jātavedas,
   to the mortal of evil intent.
8. Agni, let no non-god keep away the gift of you, a god.
   You are the master of goods.
9. Mete out a measure of your great good, o child of nourishment, to us
   who are your singers, o comrade, o good one.

10. Let our songs go to him of sharp flame, lovely to see;
    (let) our sacrifices (go) with reverence to him of many goods, lauded by
       many, for his help—
11. To Agni, the son of strength, Jātavedas, for a gift of valuable things,
    (Agni,) who once again has come to be the immortal here among
       mortals, the most delighting Hotar in the clan.

12. Agni (we beseech) on your behalf with sacrifice to the gods, Agni as the
       ceremony proceeds,
    Agni first in insights, Agni when a charger (is at stake), Agni to assure
       success to the cultivated lands.

13. Let Agni in fellowship give us of his refreshments, he who is master of valuable things.
Agni we beseech over and over when progeny and posterity (are at stake), since he is the good one, the protector of our bodies.

14. Agni—with songs reverently invoke him of sharp flame for help;
Agni the famed (do) men (invoke) for wealth, o Purumīḷha; Agni as shelter for Sudīti.
15. Agni we hymn to keep hatred away from us; Agni to give us luck and lifetime.
In all the clans he will be the one to be invoked like a helper, the lighter of the morning rays.

The next group consists of only three hymns, X.72–74 and has no real signature features.

VIII.72 (681) Agni or Praise of Oblations

Haryata Prāgātha
18 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is so opaque that it is not even clear to whom, or what, it is dedicated. The Anukramaṇī gives two choices: Agni or "praise of oblations" (*haviṣāṃ stutiḥ*). There are several good reasons to prefer the second designation, or at least to reject the first. On the one hand, Agni is named only once, close to the end (vs. 15) and in conjunction with Indra. Though the ritual fire and its divine representative are clearly the referents in a number of verses, a number of different ritual substances and apparatus are also referred to through the hymn; the fire is not significantly more prominent. Moreover, as Oldenberg points out (1888: 217), the third hymn in this little collection is clearly to Agni, so that the first should have a different dedicand.

As a number of scholars have noted, the hymn contains a sequence of ritual moments, sometimes even quoting from mantras found in later ritual, depicted in allusive and indirect fashion. Although some have tried to find a systematic and sequential representation of the, or a, sacrifice, these efforts have not been successful. Rather we seem to have a set of discontinuous sacrificial vignettes, cast as riddles. Though nowhere near as famous as the well-known riddle hymn (I.164), this hymn resembles that one in certain ways, including a fondness for numerology (vss. 7–9) and for unidentified referents (throughout).

We confess to being uncertain about many of the answers to these implicit riddles, and for others the machinery of explanation would overwhelm the poetry. We have therefore for the most part avoided parenthetical identifications and paraphrases. In general the first verses (esp. 2–5) seem to concern Agni and the initiation

of the sacrifice, signaled by the sighting of the horses and chariot (of the sun?) in verse 6. Most of the rest of the hymn, verses 7–17, concerns the preparation of soma. The final verse (18) has much the same structure as verse 6, which closed the first section of the hymn, and has similar annunciatory function.

1. Make oblation! He will come here. The Adhvaryu seeks (him) again,
   knowing his command.
2. The Hotar sits down beside the sharp soma-plant, in Manu's presence,
   taking pleasure in its companionship.
3. They seek him within (themselves) and among the people, (seek him) as
   Rudra beyond inspired thought.
   With his tongue they grasp the grain.
4. I have heated my familial bow. Imparting vital force, he has mounted
   the wood.
   With his tongue he has struck the millstone.
5. The gleaming calf, roaming here, does not find anyone to bind it.
   It pursues its mama to praise (her).
6. And it's just now that his team of horses, great and lofty,
   the binder of the chariot, has been sighted.
7. The seven (priests) milk the one (cow [=soma plant?]), and the two
   (=hands?) send the five (fingers?) nearby,
   at the ford of the river, at its sound.
8. With the ten (fingers) of Vivasvant, Indra has agitated the cask
   of heaven with his triple hammer.
9. A newer firebrand goes around the ceremonial course three times.
   With honey the Hotars perform the anointing.
10. With reverence they dip out the encompassing wellspring with its
    (water-)wheel above
    and its sides facing downward, the inexhaustible one.
11. The pressing stones are just on their way to it. The honey has been
    poured down into the lotus
    at the wellspring's surging forth.
12. O cows, approach the wellspring with help. Great is (the vessel?) of the
    sacrifice, giving teeming abundance;
    its two ears [=handles?] are golden.
13. Into the pressed soma pour glory [=milk], the full glory of the two
    world-halves.
    The Rasā (River [=water]) should receive the bull.
14. They [=soma juices] recognize their own home. Like calves coming
    together with their mothers,
    they pair off with their kin [=milk and water].
15. In the jaws of the (soma press) as it chews they make themselves a
    support in heaven,
    make their reverence to Indra and Agni, and create the sun.

16. The stranger has milked the swelling refreshment, the nourishment associated with the seven steps,
    along with the seven rays of the sun.
17. O Mitra and Varuṇa, at the rising of the sun I take of the soma:
    it is healing for the afflicted.
18. And it's just now that his place, the place of the delightful one, is to be laid down:
    he has stretched around heaven with his tongue.

VIII.73 (682) Aśvins

Gopavana Ātreya or Saptavadhri Ātreya
18 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tr̥cas

Unified by its refrain, this hymn otherwise seems haphazardly structured, with standard straightforward appeals to the Aśvins to come to our sacrifice (e.g., vss. 1–2) alternating with undeveloped questions and statements (e.g., 11–12) and, more baffling, mythic allusions. The poorly understood story of the Aśvins' rescue of Atri is mentioned in verses 3 and 7–8, their relation to Saptavadhri in verse 9, and an unnamed figure, sometimes identified by commentators as Saptavadhri, is addressed in the final verses 17–18. The stories of Atri and Saptavadhri (who are sometimes considered to be the same person) have often been discussed, and radically incompatible plots have been reconstructed for them. See, for example, Jamison (1991: 212–46) and, more recently, Houben (2010), who discusses previous accounts. Houben emphatically rejects Jamison's version, and his own has some points in its favor but remains unconvincing in its entirety, at least to us.

1. Rise up for the man who acts according to truth; hitch up your chariot, o Aśvins.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
2. Drive here with your chariot that is quicker even than a wink, Aśvins.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
3. For Atri you made an underlayer with snow beneath the hot pot, o Aśvins.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

4. Where are you? Where have you gone? Where have you flown like falcons?
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
5. If today, at any time at all, you two should hear this call,
   – let the help of you two become truly nearby.
6. The Aśvins, most often summoned on their journey, do I beg for closest friendship.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

7. You made a helpful house for Atri, o Aśvins.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
8. You obstruct the fire from burning, for Atri who speaks agreeably.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
9. Saptavadhri honed the blade of fire with hope.
   – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

10. Come here, o you who bring bullish goods; hear this call of mine.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
11. What is this (deed?) of yours proclaimed in age-old fashion, like that of old men?
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
12. You have a common kinship, a common connection (with us), o Aśvins.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

13. Your chariot that drives through the airy realms, through the two world-halves, o Aśvins—
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
14. (With it) come here near to us with your thousands of cattle and horses.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
15. Do not overlook us with your thousands of cattle and horses.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

16. Breathing her ruddy breath, Dawn has appeared; following the truth she has made the light.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.
17. Looking hard at the Aśvins, as a man with a hatchet does a tree—
    – Let the help of your two become truly nearby.
18. Break (it) like a fortress, o bold one, you who were oppressed by the black clan.
    – Let the help of you two become truly nearby.

VIII.74 (683) Agni (1–12), Śrutarvan Ārkṣya's Dānastuti (13–15)

Gopavana Ātreya
15 verses: mixed anuṣṭubh and gāyatrī arranged in tr̥cas, with the first verse of each tr̥ca anuṣṭubh, the other two gāyatrī; final tr̥ca (13–15) all anuṣṭubh

This hymn consists of five tr̥cas, each of which is thematically and syntactically unified. The first four (vss. 1–12) concentrate on the formal praise and invocation of Agni, who appears in three of the four (vss. 1–6, 10–12) insistently as the accusative object of the reverent approach of the worshipers. (The other tr̥ca, verses 7–9, has the worshiper's prayerful thought as its subject.)

Somewhat surprisingly, Agni is several times associated with a lexical and mythic complex far more characteristic of Indra: obstacle [/Vr̥tra] smashing. Agni is called the best smasher of obstacles in verse 4, and the theme returns in verses 9 and 12. This association may have been triggered here by the identification of Agni as the tribal fire of the Anu (vs. 4), the group whose leader appears to be the poet's patron Śrutarvan (vss. 4, 13, 15). The tribal fire represents the (temporary) unification of separate groups of people generally mobilizing against outside threat, and an obstacle-smashing tribal fire would serve their purposes well. Although the unification theme is not insistent in the hymn, notice that the first verse begins by announcing Agni's affiliation with every clan, "dear to many" (vs. 1ab), and the joint invocation of Agni by various peoples is repeatedly mentioned (vss. 2, 6, 10, 12).

The final tr̥ca (vss. 13–15), with slightly different metrical structure, is the poet's dānastuti of Śrutarvan and his gift of four horses and a chariot. Though it is not as self-consciously clever as some dānastutis, verse 13 contains a nice pun.

1. The guest of every clan, dear to many, (shall we praise) on your behalf
as (we) seek the prize;
Agni belonging to the house shall I praise on your behalf, (with) speech
and with thoughts of fortifying song—
2. (Agni), whom the peoples laud with their lauds like Mitra [/an ally],
offering oblations to him whose potion is melted butter—
3. To Jātavedas, much to be admired, who raised to heaven
the oblations lifted up among the conclave of the gods.

4. We have come to the best smasher of obstacles [/of Vr̥tra], preeminent
Agni [/the chief fire] belonging to the Anu,
before whose face lofty Śrutarvan, the son of R̥kṣa, flares up;
5. To immortal Jātavedas, lovely to see across the dark shades,
receiving the ghee-oblation, worthy to be invoked;
6. To Agni, whom these peoples here urgently invoke with oblations,
pouring offerings with their ladles held forth.

7. This newer thought here has been produced from us for you, o Agni,
o delighting, well-born, strong-willed guest, unerring and wondrous.
8. Let it be most wealful, most pleasing, and dear to you, Agni.
Well praised by it, grow strong.
9. Brilliance with its brilliance, it should set lofty fame upon fame
at the smashing of obstacles [/Vr̥tra].

10. (Him,) bestowing the chariot, the horse, and the cow, vibrant, a lord of
settlements like Indra,
whose claims to fame you [=priests] bring to triumph, and the one ever
to be admired (whom) the separate peoples (hymn).
11. You whom Gopavana will please with his hymn, o Agni, o Aṅgiras,
o pure one, hear our call.

12. You whom the peoples urgently invoke to win the prize,
    be attentive when it's the time for overcoming obstacles.

13. Being summoned to Śrutarvan the son of R̥kṣa, who is roused to elation,
    I will swipe [=take] four head (of horses) as if swiping [=stroking/ grooming] flocks of tufted (sheep).
14. The four swift runners of most powerful (Śrutarvan),
    along with a good chariot, will convey me to my pleasure, as birds conveyed the son of Tugra.
15. This is really true—what I forcefully point out to you, o great river Paruṣṇi:
    o waters, there exists no mortal who is a greater giver of horses than most powerful (Śrutarvan).

The next group of hymns, VIII.75–79, consists of one hymn to Agni (75), three to Indra (76–78), and one to Soma (79), in appropriately descending number of verses. The Indra hymns are all assigned to the same Kāṇva poet by the Anukramaṇī, but the other two hymns have different authors, 75 an Āṅgirasa, 79 a Bhārgava.

VIII.75 (684) Agni

Virūpa Āṅgirasa
16 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tr̥cas

Agni's role in the sacrifice and his relationship with the poet-sacrificers is the subject of the first two conventional tr̥cas (vss. 1–6), but a martial, indeed a belligerent, strain appears beginning with verse 7. The setting seems to be a contest for cattle or a cattle raid, and the poet calls on Agni to use his aggressive powers to defeat encroaching threats and assure victory and the winning of cattle and wealth (vss. 7–13). The hymn ends with general, and less combative, prayers for help for the sacrificer (vss. 14–16).

1. Harness your horses that best summon the gods, o Agni, like a charioteer.
   Take your seat as the primordial Hotar.
2. And as one who knows better, invite the gods for us, o god.
   Make our trust (in the sacrifice) into all things worth desiring,
3. Since you—o youngest one, o son of strength to whom offering is made—
   have become the one possessing the truth and worthy of the sacrifice.

4. This Agni here is the lord of the thousandfold prize and of the hundredfold;
   as sage poet he is the head of riches.

5. As craftsmen [/Ṛbhus] bend the felly, bend here, closer to the sacrifice,
with the shared invocations, o Aṅgiras [=Agni].
6. Now for him, for the heaven-bound bull, o Virūpa [=poet],
with your very own speech rouse your lovely praise hymn.

7. What Paṇi shall we lay low with his weapon, the weapon of Agni whose eye is not fooled,
when cattle are at stake?
8. Let not the clans of the gods, like rosy bathers [=Dawns],
leave us behind like cows a scrawny (calf).
9. Let not the coercion of anyone of evil intention and encompassing hatred
crash down on us, like a wave on a boat.

10. Homage to your power, Agni! The separate peoples hymn you, o god.
With your attacks shake our foe to pieces.
11. Surely you will toil for wealth for us, for our quest for cattle, Agni?
Make a wide (way) for us, you wide-maker.
12. Do not shun us in this (contest for) great stakes, any more than a burden-bearer would (his burden).
Win wealth as your takings.

13. Let this misfortune here follow some other one than us, to frighten him, o Agni.
Strengthen our power of attack.
14. (The man) who offers homage or is no stingy patron, whose ritual labor he [=Agni] has enjoyed—
him alone does Agni help with strengthening.
15. From beyond the distant boundary, cross over to the ones below,
where I am. Help them!

16. For we know of your help from of old, o Agni—help like that of a father—
and so we beg your favor.

VIII.76 (685) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
12 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tṛcas

A simple hymn that never strays far from its twin themes: Indra accompanied by the Maruts and Indra drinking soma. The Maruts are mentioned as Indra's companions in each of the first nine verses, and the invitation to soma occupies the middle six verses (4–9), while the Vṛtra myth, glancingly alluded to, occupies much of the first tṛca. Only the last tṛca lacks mention of the Maruts.

The first verse of the last tr̥ca (10) appears to present the soma-drinking as accomplished, and Indra's role as Dasyu-smiter is celebrated in the next (11). The final verse of the hymn (12) is a meta-verse describing the production of the hymn itself. The numerological expression "eight-footed, nine-cornered" is, as Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.), a reference to the gāyatrī tr̥cas in which this hymn is composed, with eight-syllable lines arranged into three verses of three pādas each.

Although the hymn is simple, it makes implicit reference to a complex ritual development—that, in the course of the R̥gvedic period, the Midday Pressing, originally dedicated entirely to Indra, made room for the Maruts as joint recipients of the soma with Indra. An important mythological treatment of this ritual innovation is found in I.165 and related hymns. Here we see only the liturgical result, an insistence on Indra Marutvant in a soma-drinking context.

1. This master of artifice here I now invoke, Indra, holding sway by his might,
   accompanied by the Maruts—as if to twist (him here).
2. This Indra here, with the Maruts as comrades, split apart the head of Vr̥tra
   with a hundred-jointed mace.
3. Having grown strong, with the Maruts as comrades, Indra propelled Vr̥tra apart,
   releasing the waters of the sea.

4. Here he is—the one by whom in truth this sun was won,
   by Indra, accompanied by the Maruts—to drink the soma.
5. Accompanied by the Maruts, possessing the silvery drink, mighty, conferring abundance—
   Indra do we invoke with songs.
6. Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, we invoke with our age-old thought,
   to drink of this soma here.

7. O Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, giver of rewards, drink the soma, you of a hundred resolves,
   at this sacrifice here, much praised one.
8. Just for you, o Indra, accompanied by the Maruts, possessor of the stone, are the pressed soma-drinks,
   provided with hymns, poured out with our whole heart.
9. Just drink, o Indra, with the Maruts as comrades, the pressed soma at the rituals of the day,
   sharpening your mace with might.

10. Standing up with your might, you made your two lips shake after you had drunk
    the pressed soma in the cup, Indra.

11. Both the world-halves yearned after you as you howled,
    Indra, when you became the smiter of the Dasyus.
12. An eight-footed nine-cornered speech that touches the truth—
    I have measured out its body because of Indra.

VIII.77 (686) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
11 verses: gāyatrī arranged in tr̥cas 1–9; br̥hatī 10, satobr̥hatī 11, arranged in a pragātha

This hymn primarily treats the obscure Emuṣa myth, a boyhood deed of Indra's. As far as can be determined, in the R̥gvedic version (there are later Vedic prose versions, e.g., Taittirīya Saṃhitā VI.2.4.2–3) the just-born Indra, after a brief dialogue with his mother, takes a bow named Bunda and kills a boar named Emuṣa, allowing him to capture (or Viṣṇu to capture for him) a special mess of rice porridge, as well as some buffalo, which he cooks for his father and mother. The most important (and essentially only) R̥gvedic passages about this myth outside of VIII.77 are I.61.7, VIII.45.4–5, VIII.69.14–15, and VIII.96.2.

Our hymn begins with Indra's dialogue with his mother (vss. 1–2), a dialogue found in the same words in VIII.45.4–5. Since in that passage Indra takes the Bunda bow prior to questioning his mother, we can connect the first two verses of this hymn with the story in verses 6–8, even though the Bunda bow is not mentioned here in verses 1–2 and other material intervenes. Between the dialogue of verses 1–2 and the rest of the story starting in verse 6 are several references to other deeds of Indra's, at least one of them (vs. 5) even more obscure than the Emuṣa myth. It does seem likely, however, that the drinking of prodigious amounts of soma in verse 4 is part of the Emuṣa story: in III.48, also about Indra's boyhood and his relationship to mother and father, he consumes vast amounts of soma right after birth.

When the story is taken up again, we first are given a general summary of the myth in 6ab, and then the first incident in the story, the taking of the Bunda bow, in 6c. In our opinion, verse 8 is the speech of Indra's mother, urging him to capture the porridge by means of the bow. Her "just born right now" (vs. 8c) echoes the "just born" that begins verse 1, and these two phrases form a ring defining the Emuṣa story. Verse 7 continues the story of the Bunda bow and the aiming of the arrow. Verse 9, the final verse in the gāyatrī meter, is a standard summary of Indra's great deeds.

The last two verses (10–11) are in different meter. The first gives a précis of the myth, introducing Viṣṇu's role in securing the rice porridge, a detail that does not appear in accord with verse 6. The final pāda of verse 10 identifies Indra's opponent as a boar (no mention of the boar in the earlier verses) and in its final word provides

the boar's name, Emuṣa, as the solution of the riddle. (The name Emuṣa occurs only here in the R̥gveda.) The version given in verse 10 agrees better with the one in I.61.7 than it does with the treatment in the rest of this hymn and indeed in the rest of Maṇḍala VIII, which contains the other pertinent passages, and one wonders if the poet was trying to harmonize two versions that he knew of this myth by tacking the Viṣṇu verse onto the Viṣṇu-less version found in the gāyatrī portion of the hymn. The final verse (11) is a high rhetorical celebration of the Bunda bow and of Indra's arms that wield it.

1. Just born, the one of a hundred resolves asked his mother,
   "Which ones are powerful; which ones are famed?"
2. Then she, the strong one [/Śavasī], named to him Aurṇavābha [/the spider's son] and Ahīśuva [/the one puffed up like a snake].
   "Let them be (yours) to lay low, son."
3. The Vr̥tra-smiter just hammered them together, like spokes in a nave with a hammer.
   When grown up, he became smiter of Dasyus.

4. At one shot he drank thirty ponds at once,
   hogsheads [?] of soma—(did) Indra.
5. He bored through to the Gandharva in the bottomless dusky realms,
   to strengthen the composers of sacred formulations—(did) Indra.
6. He pierced (the boar Emuṣa), pierced the cooked rice porridge forth from the mountains, and held it fast.
   Indra (took) the well-stretched Bunda-bow.

7. Your arrow with a hundred ruddy glints and a thousand feathers was the single one
   that you made into your yokemate, o Indra.
8. [Indra's mother:] "With it [=Bunda-bow] bring to the praisers, to the superior men and to their ladies, (the rice porridge?) to eat,
   though you were just born right now, o steadfast one of the R̥bhus."
9. These highest exploits performed by you in profusion
   you held fast with your whole heart.

10. All these things Viṣṇu brought here, the wide-striding one spurred on by you:
    a hundred buffaloes, a rice porridge cooked in milk—(when) Indra (pierced) the boar Emuṣa.
11. Powerfully ruling, well-made, made of boar is your bow, the golden Bunda, that aims straight.
    Your two arms are fit for battle, well-equipped, increasing injury even for one who protects himself from injury.

VIII.78 (687) Indra

Kurusuti Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas 1–9, br̥hatī 10

This hymn is all about greed. The first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) barely mentions the offerings we make to Indra in the haste to list the things we want in return, down to the earrings in verse 3. The last tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) praises both Indra and Soma for their (potential) generosity, and verse 9 gives another list of desired gifts. Verse 10, in a different meter, may be the most egregious of all: the poet, picking up the desire he expressed for grain in verse 9, tells Indra he plans to do no labor for his grain, but expects Indra to deliver it, not only grown but processed—preferably stacked, but at least mown. So Indra is expected to serve as farmhand! This verse may indirectly express the stockbreeder's disdain for agriculture.

The middle tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) contrasts somewhat with its surroundings. Though the greed motif is found in verse 4, it is expressed in terms of Indra's unique powers to increase wealth, to win goods, and to give them. The rhetorical pattern set in this verse carries into the following verses, where the description of the god's powers becomes more general. However, the theme of the rest of the hymn is not far from the surface, for Indra's ability to see and to anticipate everything a mortal might do would allow him to identify proper recipients and deny gifts to those who behave badly.

1. (Taking pleasure) in the offering cake and of the soma-stalk, Indra, bring here to us a thousand
   and a hundred cows, o champion.
2. Bring here to us an ornament, a cow, a horse, an adornment,
   along with golden jewelry.
3. And bring here to us many earrings, bold one,
   for you are famed as a good one.

4. Never is another man within your abundance, Indra. There is no good winner and no good giver
   other than you for the cantor, o champion.
5. Never is Indra to be put down nor the able one to be circumvented.
   He hears and sees all.
6. Not to be outwitted, he watches out for the fury of mortals,
   watches out before the insult (comes).

7. Full of resolve is the belly of the powerful, (booty-)apportioning,
   Vr̥tra-smiting drinker of soma.
8. In you are goods united and all auspicious things, o Soma,
   goods good for giving, not to go astray.

9. Just toward you does my desire hasten, seeking grain, seeking cattle, seeking gold,
toward you, seeking horses.

10. With my hope on you, Indra, I never take scythe in hand.
Supply us with grain by the handful, whether just mown or already stacked together, bounteous one.

VIII.79 (688) Soma

Kr̥tnu Bhārgava
9 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 9, probably arranged in tr̥cas

One of the rare hymns to Soma outside of the IXth Maṇḍala. None of the physical or ceremonial properties of soma the substance, the ritual drink, is found in this hymn. There is only indirect reference to the preparation of soma, in verse 3, where the "body-makers," presumably the priests who prepare the soma, are given shelter from hatred, and in verse 4 soma is called "possessor of the silvery (drink) [that is, soma itself]," an epithet otherwise almost exclusively used of Indra.

Instead of the ritual soma, we have here a portrait of an all-powerful and multi-talented divine helper: a winner (vs. 1), a poet (vs. 1), a healer (vs. 2), a giver (vs. 5), a finder of lost objects (vs. 6), and especially a protector from hostility (vss. 3, 4, 9). Only in verse 8 is there any hint that Soma might ever be anything but benevolent to us, but this hint is not developed.

1. Here is the effective gambler, ungraspable, all-conquering Soma, who got the lucky break—
a seer, an inspired poet with poetic skill.
2. He covers over what is naked; he heals everything that is sick.
The blind man sees; the lame sets forth.
3. O Soma, for those who create your body [=soma-pressers] you hold out a broad defense
from the hateful things done by others.

4. You possessor of the silvery drink—through your perception, through your skills you keep away from heaven and earth
the hatred of any evil man.
5. And when those with (ritual) tasks proceed to their tasks, they will surely reach the generosity of the giver,
should they (manage to) deflect the desire of the thirsting man.
6. He finds what was previously lost; he raises up the man who follows truth.
He lengthens our (as yet) untraversed lifetime.

7. Very kindly to us, merciful, of undistracted resolve, unquenchable—
   be weal for our heart, o Soma.
8. Don't agitate us, o Soma; don't frighten us, o king.
   Don't smite our heart with turmoil.
9. When I behold malevolent thoughts of the gods in my own seat,
   o king, ward off hateful things; you who give rewards, ward off failures.

The next group of hymns consists of 80–87, with three hymns to Indra (80–82), one to the All Gods (83), one to Agni (84), and three to the Aśvins (85–87), all but the last showing the appropriate descending number of verse. But 87 can in fact be broken into two original hymns, to produce the proper sequence. The poets named by the Anukramaṇī are various.

VIII.80 (689) Indra (1–9), Gods (10)

Ekadyū Naudhasa
10 verses: gāyatrī, probably arranged in tr̥cas, except final verse, triṣṭubh 10

The final pāda of this hymn (10d) is the same as the refrain in the verbally clever and finely structured hymns of Nodhas Gautama in Maṇḍala I (I.58, 60–64). (R̥gveda I.59 is also attributed to him, but lacks the refrain; see also nearby VIII.88.) The patronymic of our poet (Naudhasa) identifies him as a descendant of Nodhas, and he seems to have inherited some of his ancestor's skill: the tone of the hymn is light and slangy, and he addresses Indra informally and with mocking exasperation, especially in the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6), in which the poet complains that Indra has been slow to help his chariot in the race (see also vs. 8).

The poet seems to be withholding his highest praise for Indra until Indra has earned it. He begins the hymn by announcing that he hasn't chosen anyone else for certain as his mercy-giver, and invites Indra to show mercy. He ends the hymn proper (vs. 9) with a promise that Indra *will be* proclaimed as lord after he "makes his fourth sacrificial name." What these four names are is not at all certain, but we suggest that the phrase forms a ring with the first verse, where the title/name "mercy-giver" hasn't yet been bestowed on the god. The poet is thus urging Indra to perform the actions that will earn him the names that will attract sacrifice and praise from mortals.

In the final verse, in a different meter, the poet names himself and reminds all the gods (and goddesses, an unusual inclusion) that he has performed service for them, demanding appropriate recompense.

1. Because I have not made anyone else my for-certain dispenser of mercy,
      o you of a hundred resolves,
   be merciful to us, Indra.

2. You who, not shirking, in the past, time after time, helped us to win the prize,
   be merciful to us, Indra.
3. Are you really one who rouses even the feeble, who are the helper of the soma-presser?
   Will you indeed muster your ability for us?

4. O Indra, possessor of the stone, advance our chariot even when it is behind;
   put it in front for me.
5. Blast it! Are you just going to sit there now? Put our chariot first
   for utmost fame that seeks the prize.
6. Help our chariot that seeks the prize. Easy for you to do. Why this runaround?
   Just make us victorious!

7. Indra, stand fast. You are a stronghold. The lucky woman goes to a rendezvous with you—
   this visionary thought conforming to her season [/the ritual sequence].
8. Don't make it [=chariot?] share in disgrace: the racecourse is wide, the stake is set;
   the elbows have been twisted outward [=driving posture?].
9. When you will make your fourth sacrificial name—this we eagerly desire—
   after that you will be solemnly proclaimed as our lord.

10. Ekadyū has strengthened you, you immortals; he has invigorated you, you gods and you who are goddesses.
    To him show generosity to be praised. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, acquiring goods through his insight.

VIII.81 (690) Indra

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Though assigned to a different poet, this hymn, like the last one (VIII.81), addresses Indra with a certain irreverence and informality, with multiple demands that Indra seize goods and bring them to us, in addition to the usual praise of his power and generosity. One verse is somewhat puzzling: the middle verse (5), in which Indra seems to participate in the ritual in priestly roles as well as being the object of worship, but this theme is not pursued.

1. Grab for us here a brilliant cattle-rich handful, o Indra,
   who have great hands, with your right one.

2. For we know you as powerfully ranging, of powerful gifts, of powerful bounty,
   of powerful mass, with your help.
3. For when you wish to give, o champion, neither gods nor mortals
   hinder you, anymore than they would a fearsome bull.

4. Come now! Let us praise Indra, the sovereign king who holds sway over goods.
   He will not neglect us with his generosity.
5. He will start up the praise; he will join in the singing; he will listen to the sāman being sung.
   He will greet it with generosity.
6. Bring to us with your right hand; seize with your left.
   Indra, don't deal us out of goods.

7. Hop to! Bring here boldly, bold one, for the peoples
   the possessions of the very impious.
8. Indra, the prize that now is yours is to be won by the inspired poets.
   Win it with us.
9. Your all-glittering prizes come speeding in an instant to us.
   They awaken at our will and right away.

VIII.82 (691) Indra

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn is an insistent invitation to the soma sacrifice, punctuated by imperatives: "run," "come here," "drink," and so forth, and larded with descriptions of the soma in various stages of preparation. It is simple in diction and entirely focused on the ritual situation and the hope for Indra's arrival, save for the last verse (9), which alludes briefly to the myth of the stealing of soma from heaven. The last tr̥ca is marked by a refrain.

1. Run here from afar and from nearby, Vr̥tra-smiter,
   in response to the proffering of the honey.
2. Sharp are the soma-drinks. Come here! The pressed drinks are ready to exhilarate.
   Drink heartily as you are accustomed.
3. Become exhilarated on the refreshment, and then in accord with your desire and your fervor
   it will become weal for your heart, Indra.

4. You without rival—here, come here! You are being called down to the hymns
   (while you are) in the highest luminous realm of heaven.

5. For you this one here has been pressed by stones, prepared with cows [=milk], for exhilaration.
   The soma is being poured forth, Indra.
6. Indra, hear my call. Reach the drinking and satiety
   of the soma that has been pressed among us and provided with cows.

7. Indra, the soma in the beakers and in the cups that has been pressed for you—
   drink of it. You are master of it.
8. The soma that is seen in the cups, like the moon in the waters—
   drink of it. You are master of it.
9. That which the falcon brought to you with his foot across the airy realms—the one that could not be recaptured—
   drink of it. You are master of it.

VIII.83 (692) All Gods

Kusīdin Kāṇva
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The first two tr̥cas (vss. 1–6) of this hymn to the All Gods mention only the Ādityas and are quite straightforward. The poet praises the help of these gods in the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) and asks for valuables in the second (vss. 4–6). The final tr̥ca turns to other gods (see esp. vs. 7) and to a more interesting topic: the ultimate kinship of gods and men (vss. 7–8). The gods are reminded of this relationship presumably to stimulate them to give help and goods.

1. We would choose the great help of the gods,
   of the bulls, to aid us.
2. Let them be our yokemates always—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   and forethoughtful strengtheners.
3. You carry us across many perils [?], as if across the waters with boats—
   you charioteers of truth.

4. Let there be a treasure for us, o Aryaman; a treasure worthy of praise, o Varuṇa,
   for we would choose a treasure.
5. For you forethoughtful ones, who care for the stranger, are holding sway over a treasure.
   What belongs to evil (shall) not (reach) it, o Ādityas.
6. O you of good gifts, we, whether dwelling peacefully or traveling on our route,
   call upon you, gods, for strengthening.

7. O Indra, Viṣṇu, Maruts, Aśvins—of these your common births with us
   take cognizance.

8. You of good gifts, now once again in the same way we bring to the fore
   our brotherhood with you
   in the womb of our mother.
9. For you of good gifts, with Indra preeminent—you are heaven-sent.
   And so I call just upon you.

VIII.84 (693) Agni

Uśanā Kāvya
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This short and simple hymn to Agni makes no reference to his fiery qualities, and only glancing ones to his ritual role: as guest in our houses (vs. 1) set here by the gods (vs. 2). The most salient aspect of the hymn is the series of questions it contains: in the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) the poet asks what services we should perform for Agni and how we should perform them (vss. 4–5); the final tr̥ca (vss. 7–10) again begins with a question (vs. 7), this time about which poet is the recipient of Agni's poetic stimulation. The poet is clearly concerned with producing the proper praise for the god; he mentions hymns or praises in verses 3–7.

The Anukramaṇī names as the poet the legendary and mythic figure Uśanā Kāvya, to whom the three hymns IX.87–89 are also attributed. It is not clear why, save for the mention of the *kaví* "sage poet" in verse 2.

1. The dearest guest will I praise for you—dear like an ally—
   Agni, worth acquiring like a chariot,
2. Him, discerning like a sage poet, whom the gods now once again
   have set down among mortals.
3. You, youngest one—protect pious men; listen to their hymns.
   Guard their lineage along with their life.

4. In what fashion (shall we present) a praise invocation to you, o Agni,
   Aṅgiras, child of nourishment,
   (fit) for your desire, your fervor?
5. With our mind on what sacrifice might we do pious service, o youthful
   (son) of strength?
   And what shall I speak as homage here?
6. So that then you will make all dwellings lovely for us
   and make our hymns have riches as their prize.

7. Whose thoughts in profusion do you now quicken, o houselord—
   the man whose hymns are (presented) to you at the winning of
   cattle?

8. They groom him, the very resolute one who goes in front at the contests,
   the prizewinner, in their own dwelling places.
9. He dwells peacefully in peaceful ways that bring success—whom no one smites, but who himself smites.
   O Agni, whoever is rich in heroes thrives.

VIII.85 (694) Aśvins

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
9 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Renou (*EVP* XVI: 68) deems this hymn "elementary," and indeed the hymn reduces the divine–human interaction to its simplest dimensions—the refrain promising the gods ritual offerings and the rest of the verse sketching the poet's invitation, the gods' journey, and the returns desired. The poet identifies himself twice (vss. 3–4).

1. Come to my call, o Nāsatyas, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
2. Hear this praise song of mine, Aśvins, this call of mine,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
3. This Kr̥ṣṇa is calling you, o Aśvins whose goods are prizewinning mares,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

4. Hear the call of Kr̥ṣṇa the praising singer, o men,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
5. Extend undeceivable protection to the praising poet, o men,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
6. Go to the house of the pious man who praises just so, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

7. Hitch the donkey to the chariot whose parts are solid, o you who bring bullish goods,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
8. With your triply-turning chariot with its three chariot boxes drive here, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.
9. Now promote my hymns, o Nāsatyas, o Aśvins,
   to drink of the honeyed soma.

VIII.86 (695) Aśvins

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa or Viśvaka Kārṣṇi
5 verses: jagatī

This hymn clearly depicts a precise situation, with the poet Viśvaka making a direct appeal to the Aśvins, but the particular nature of the situation is difficult to ascertain. The two named men, Viśvaka and Viṣṇāpū, are found together three times elsewhere, always in Aśvin context. In nearly identical Kakṣīvant passages (I.116.23, 117.7) the Aśvins "gave" (*dadathuḥ*) Viṣṇāpū to Kr̥ṣṇiya Viśvaka (Viṣṇāpū compared to "a lost herd-animal" in 116.23); in X.65.12 they "let loose" (*áva sr̥jathuḥ*) Viṣṇāpū to Viśvaka. The first verb occurs twice in our hymn (2b, 3b), though not with a personal object; the other verb has a close synonym (*mumócatam* "release") in the refrain of all five verses. Thus, our hymn seems roughly to conform to the other R̥gvedic occurrences of these personae. Unfortunately this is all we know of the story: neither of the named men occurs in later texts, and though Geldner provides a contextualizing narrative, himself relying on Sāyaṇa, with Viśvaka the "grieved and deserted" (*betrübte und verlassene*) father who catches sight of his son, a poet who had gone far away to seek his fortune, there is no real evidence for this plot in the R̥gvedic passages—not even for the father–son relationship. Like many of the Aśvin myths it is intriguing and probably ultimately unknowable.

The Viśvaka/Viṣṇāpū episode seems only to occupy the first three verses, which may form a tr̥ca, as Oldenberg suggests (*Noten* ad loc.). The last two verses (4–5) retain the final-pāda refrain (of vss. 1–3), but omit the repeated c-pāda with its mention of Viśvaka. The appeal to Indra for help (vs. 4) and the praise of truth (vs. 5) seem loosely attached to the rest of the hymn.

1. Since both of you are wondrous healers, embodying joy, and both of you are (men) of skill and of speech,
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies [=sons?]. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him? [=Viṣṇāpū?])!
2. How shall one of expansive mind now offer praise to you? You two have given insight (to me? Viṣṇāpū?) to seek a better state.
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!
3. Since you two have given this radiance to Viṣṇāpū to seek a better state, o you who provide many enjoyments,
   Viśvaka calls upon you at the making of bodies. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!

4. And this hero, the winner of spoils and possessor of the silvery drink [=Indra], do we call upon for help, even though he is at a distance,
   upon him whose favor is sweetest like that of a father. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!
5. By truth god Savitar performs his labors; the horn of truth is extended widely.

The truth overpowers even those doing great battle. – Do not keep us away from partnership with you. Release (him?)!

VIII.87 (696) Aśvins

Dyumnīka Vāsiṣṭha or Priyamedha Āṅgirasa or Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī arranged in pragāthas

A typical and rather banal Aśvin hymn, with the simple message "come here, drink the soma, give us aid and goods," although there are a few striking images, especially in verse 1.

As Oldenberg (1888: 217) points out, this six-verse hymn, following a five-verse hymn, violates the proper order, but, as he also points out, the first two pragāthas are parallel in structure and phraseology, and may well form one four-verse hymn, with the final pragātha (vss. 5–6) an originally separate hymn. Detaching the last verses would restore an acceptable order, with a five-verse hymn (86), followed by four- and two-verse hymns.

1. Brilliant is the praise song for you two, o Aśvins, like a blood-red (horse) [?] at its outpouring. Come here!
   This (outpouring) of pressed honey is dear to heaven, o men. Drink like buffaloes at a salt-pocket.
2. Drink the honeyed hot milk, o Aśvins; sit here on the ritual grass, o men.
   Reaching exhilaration here in the dwelling of Manu, protect our vital energy along with our property.

3. The Priyamedhas have called you here with all your forms of help.
   Drive your course right up to the pleasing sacrifice of the man who has twisted the ritual grass at the rituals of daybreak.
4. Drink the honeyed soma, o Aśvins; sit close together on the ritual grass.
   Having grown strong, come from heaven right up to our good praise, like buffaloes to a salt-pocket.

5. Now drive here with your horses frothing at the mouth, o Aśvins.
   O wondrous ones of golden course, o lords of beauty, strong through truth, drink the soma.
6. Because we inspired poets in our admiration call upon you to win the prize,
   you two, agreeable, wondrous, and possessed of many wonders—come here with insight and attentive hearing, o Aśvins.

Oldenberg groups the four Indra hymns 88–91 together, though their numbers of verses do not conform to the expected sequence.

VIII.88 (697) Indra

Nodhas Gautama
6 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

This hymn is attributed by the Anukramaṇī to Nodhas Gautama, the skillful poet of I.58–64, whose descendant Ekadyū Naudhasa is the purported author of nearby VIII.80, which utilized the Nodhas Gautama refrain. This refrain is not found in this hymn, though the most striking word in the refrain, *makṣū́* "soon, right away," does appear in verse 2. And in verse 4 the Gotamas are identified as creators of the chant being presented to Indra in phraseology very close to that used in the Nodhas Gautama hymns in Maṇḍala I (esp. I.61.16, but also I.60.5, I.63.9, I.62.13).

The hymn contains the usual mixture of praise for Indra's overwhelming might and pleas for his largesse. The poet uses Indra's unconstrained powers as an argument for his exercising generosity (see esp. vss. 3, 6). It is a well-crafted and pleasing piece; however, whether it is a part of the oeuvre of the Nodhas of Maṇḍala I is difficult to determine on stylistic grounds.

1. To him, the wondrous, vanquishing with his attack, becoming exhilarated from the good stalk,
   to Indra do we bellow with our hymns on your behalf, like milk-cows in good pastures to their calf.
2. The heaven-ruling one of good drops, swathed in powers, much nourishing like a mountain
   do we beseech for a prize rich in livestock, hundredfold, thousandfold, consisting of cattle—right away.

3. The high, hard rocks do not obstruct you, Indra.
   When you wish to give goods to a praiser like me, no one confounds this (intention) of yours.
4. As a battler with resolve, vast power, and wondrous skill, you surmount all created things with your might.
   This chant here will turn you hither for help, the chant which the Gotamas have generated.

5. Because you project beyond the limits of heaven with your strength,
   the earthly realm does not contain you, Indra. You have waxed strong following your independent power.
6. There is no constriction of your bounty, bounteous one, when you show favor to the pious man.
   Become the stimulator of our speech, most munificent, for the winning of prizes.

VIII.89 (698) Indra

Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
7 verses: bṛhatī alternating with satobṛhatī, arranged in pragāthas 1–4; anuṣṭubh 5–6, bṛhatī 7, arranged in a tṛca

The signature word of this hymn is *bṛhánt* "lofty": it is the first and last word of the hymn, and appears in every verse except the two anuṣṭubh verses (5–6). (Note that the names of the other two meters in the hymn, bṛhatī and satobṛhatī, contain a form of this word as well.) The theme of the hymn is the Vṛtra battle and the singing of the Maruts that strengthens and inspires Indra for the battle. The middle verse (4) is quite possibly the Maruts' direct address to Indra, the sacred formulation (*bráhman*—note the phonological similarity to *bṛhánt*) mentioned in the previous verse (3).

The hymn begins and ends with an exhortation to produce a song or hymn for Indra. In verse 1 it is explicitly the Maruts who are thus urged (so also vs. 3), but in the last half of verse 7 the addressees are not identified (though they must be plural, unlike the singular "you" of 7ab). This lack of referent allows the verse to be interpreted in two ways—as a further address to the Maruts or as an address to the human poets—and this in turn allows the Maruts and the poets to be identified with each other and allows the current ritual to acquire the resonance of a divine correspondent. The ritual context is clear from the beginning: in verse 1 the generation of the light suggests the dawn sacrifice; in 6ab the creation of the sacrifice and its elements are Indra's recompense for his cosmogonic deeds; and in 7cd the mention of the heated gharma pot evokes a particular ritual, the Pravargya, which involves heating milk to boiling—milk that may be indirectly alluded to in 7a.

The hymn is also notable for what it lacks: any request for aid or riches. It is that very rare thing in the Ṛgveda, a pure hymn of praise. It is also nicely crafted, with balanced rhetorical responsions and variations and phonological and morphological play throughout, in deceptively direct and simple language.

1. For Indra, o Maruts, sing the lofty (sāman) that best smites Vṛtra,
   with which those who are strong through truth [=Maruts or gods] gave birth to the light, god(like) and wakeful, for the god.
2. The smiter of malediction blew away the interdictions. Then brilliant Indra was at hand.
   The gods yielded themselves to partnership with you, Indra—you of lofty radiance, with the Maruts as your flock.

3. To lofty Indra, o Maruts, chant your sacred formulation.
   He will smite Vṛtra—the Vṛtra-smiter of a hundred resolves—with his mace of a hundred joints.
4. [Maruts:] "Bear down boldly, you of bold mind: there will be lofty fame for you.
   Let the waters, the mothers, flow apart at speed. You will smite Vṛtra; you will win the sun."

5. When you were born for the smiting of Vr̥tra, you bounteous one without predecessor,
   then you spread out the earth, and then you propped up heaven.
6. Then the sacrifice was born for you, then the chant and (the fire's) "laughter."
   You dominate all this, what has been born and what is to be born.
7. You brought the cooked (milk) into the raw (cows); you made the sun mount in heaven.
   [To singers/Maruts:] Like the gharma pot when the sāman (is sung), heat the lofty (song) enjoyable to the one who yearns for song, with its well-twisted ornaments.

VIII.90 (699) Indra

Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

Indra as the powerful smiter of obstacles is called to our sacrifice and begged for aid in battle and for riches. There is nothing particularly remarkable in this hymn except for verse 5, where there appears to be an obscure reference to Varuṇa as the "sustainer of domains," who concedes various unopposable obstacles to Indra. This epithet, *carṣaṇī-dhŕ̥t*, is actually more often used of Indra than of other gods, but Varuṇa is also so called (IV.1.2, twice), and a telling passage, VII.85.3, describes an amicable division of labor between Indra, who smashes unopposable obstacles, and Varuṇa, who sustains the peoples, in almost identical phraseology to our verse 5. What then does "concede" mean in our passage? Most likely, in our view, that Varuṇa concedes the sphere of warfare and martial defense to Indra, while continuing to perform his own task of assuring orderly existence in times and places of peace.

1. Let Indra, who is to be invoked, tend to all our battles.
   Let the Vr̥tra-smiter attend upon our sacred formulations and our pressings—he who has the highest overwhelming power, who is equal to song.
2. You are the foremost giver of bounties; you are the real thing, the one who performs the master's part.
   We would choose to be the associates of the powerfully brilliant son of strength, of the great one.

3. The unsurpassable sacred formulations are being performed for you, o Indra who yearn for song.
   Take pleasure in these "teams," o possessor of fallow bays, which we have thought up for you, Indra.

4. For you, bounteous one, the real thing who cannot be bowed, bear down on many obstacles.
   You, o strongest one with mace in hand—bring wealth nearby for the pious man.

5. You, Indra, are the glorious possessor of the silvery drink, o lord of strength.
   You, all alone, smite the unopposable obstacles that have been conceded by the one who sustains the domains [=Varuṇa?].
6. You, o lord, the forethoughtful one, do we now beseech for bounty, as we would beseech Bhaga for a portion.
   Your shelter is like a great hide, Indra. May your benevolent thoughts reach us.

VIII.91 (700) Indra

Apālā Ātreyī
7 verses; paṅkti 1–2, anuṣṭubh 3–7

This deceptively simple, and much discussed, hymn consists of a monologue embedded in a charm for healing and fertility. Unusually the speaker is an unmarried girl, who undertakes a clandestine soma ritual for Indra, with erotic overtones, in ultimate preparation for her marriage. It begins with a contextualizing introduction (vs. 1a–c): a maiden going to fetch water finds soma on her way. She brings it home and addresses first the soma and then Indra. She announces to soma her intention to press it (1de): as it turns out she presses it with her own mouth (2c) and offers it to Indra along with all the accoutrements of a real soma sacrifice (vs. 2). Indra arrives for the soma, and she seeks to understand his intentions, even as she assures him that she will keep his presence a secret (3ab). The lexeme translated "recite" (*ádhi √i)* is an item of pedagogical vocabulary, appropriate to her age and stage of life, and refers to students' oral recitation of their lessons; in this context it seems to mean "reveal your presence verbally." She then urges the soma to flow softly, in contrast to the excessive noise usually associated with soma's preparation (3cd). In verse 4 she tremulously speculates to herself about whether Indra will be able to achieve what she wants from her private soma-pressing, and worries, as an adolescent girl apprehensive about sexuality and marriage, about sexual intercourse with Indra, a rather formidable first sexual partner, one might think. In the next two verses (5–6) she expresses her wishes—three different types of hair growth: on the fields, that is, plants; on her father's bald head; and on her "belly," the last wish indicating a desire for pubic hair as a sign of sexual maturity. Apālā's words end here; the final verse says nothing directly about whether Indra fulfilled her expressed wishes (though we take it as implying that he did), but simply states that he purified her by pulling

her through increasingly smaller holes, rendering her “sun-skinned,” quite possibly a reference to the curing of teenage acne, a frequent accompaniment to the entry into sexual maturity.

This R̥gvedic hymn is extensively quoted and embedded in a prose narrative in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (I.220–21). For detailed discussion of this hymn and its middle Vedic version, see Jamison (1991: 149–51, 165–67). That account and this translation are deeply indebted to and dependent upon the ground-breaking discussion by Hanns-Peter Schmidt in chapter 1 “The Affliction of Apālā (R̥gveda 8.91)” in his 1987 *Some Women's Rites and Rights in the Veda* (pp. 1–29).

1. A maiden going down to the water found soma along the way.
   Bringing it home she said, “I will press you for Indra; I will press you for the able one.
2. “You over there, the dear little hero who goes earnestly looking from house to house,
   drink this (soma), pressed by the jaws—(soma) accompanied by grain, by gruel, by cakes, by hymns.
3. “We wish to comprehend you; we will not ‘recite’ you aloud.
   Softly-like, ever so softly-like, o drop, flow around for Indra.
4. “Will he be able? Will he do it? Will he make us better off?
   Shall we, though coming as husband-haters, unite with Indra?
5. “Indra, make these three surfaces grow forth—
   the head of my Papa, the field, and this on my belly.
6. “That field of ours, this body of mine,
   and my Papa's head—make all these hairy.”
7. In the nave of a chariot, in the nave of a wagon, in the nave of a yoke, o Indra of a hundred resolves,
   having purified Apālā three times, you made (her) sun-skinned.

The next three hymns, 92–94, should be grouped together, according to Oldenberg (1888: 218).

VIII.92 (701) Indra

Śrutakakṣa Āṅgirasa or Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
33 verses: gāyatrī, except anuṣṭubh 1, arranged in tr̥cas

This long, loosely structured hymn is essentially a constantly repeated invitation to Indra to come to the soma sacrifice. Although the poet does ask for aid from time to time, the focus is on the sacrifice, the verbal accompaniments, and the soma itself. The poet names himself (or nicknames himself: the name is Śrutakakṣa “having a

famous armpit" [or a famous crotch]) in verse 25. This nickname appears in the midst of a striking sequence using the adverb *áram* "fitting(ly)" (vss. 24–27) in a clever shift implicitly equating Indra's body parts (e.g., "fit for your cheek" vs. 24a) with the gifts the poet hopes to receive (e.g., "fit for a horse" vs. 25a), at least once punningly: verse 35c, where the word *dhā́mane* can refer both to a body part, the "fundament," that is, the buttocks, and to Indra's conferring of gifts.

1. Sing (him) here to the drinking of your stalk; sing forth to Indra,
   the all-conquering one, of a hundred resolves, most liberal to the settled domains,
2. Much-invoked, much-praised leader of song, famed of old—
   call him, "Indra!"
3. It's Indra who is the giver to us of great prizes, the dancer.
   The great one, in a crouch [=driving posture], will guide (the prizes) here.

4. The belipped one has drunk of the stalk conferring good skill, accompanied by oblations,
   of the drop mixed with grain—has Indra.
5. Chant forth to him, to Indra, to drink the soma,
   for that is his strengthening.
6. Having drunk of this god here, of his exhilarating drinks, the god with his power
   will surmount all beings.

7. Him, entirely victorious, held in place amid all your hymns
   you will rouse for help—
8. The soma-drinker who is an unassailable fighter who cannot be budged,
   a superior man of unobstructable resolve.
9. Do your best for wealth for us, as one knowing many things, o Indra, you who are equal to song.
   Help us in the decisive (contest for) spoils.

10. Even from yonder, Indra, drive up close to us with hundred-prized,
    thousand-prized refreshment.
11. Let's go to the visionary thoughts of our visionary poet; with (the thoughts as) our steeds, o able one who breaks out the cows,
    might we conquer in battles, o possessor of the mace.
12. We will make you take pleasure in our hymns, o you of a hundred resolves,
    as cows do in their pastures.

13. Because all things in the mortal way are in accord with your desire, o you of a hundred resolves,
    we have arrived at our hopes, possessor of the mace.

14. To you, o son of strength, the desirers of desires have turned.
    Nothing surpasses you, Indra.
15. O bull, give aid to us with the awesome, dashing
    visionary thought that gains the most, and with plenitude.

16. O Indra of a hundred resolves, that which now is the most brilliant exhilaration for you,
    with that you should now become exhilarated on the exhilarating drink—
17. That of yours which possesses the brightest fame, which is the best smiter of Vr̥tra, Indra,
    that exhilaration which best gives strength.
18. For we know what of yours was given by you—possessor of the stone, real drinker of soma—
    to all communities, wondrous one.

19. Let our hymns encircle with rhythm the soma pressed for Indra for exhilaration.
    Let the bards chant their chant.
20. He in whom are all splendors, in whom the seven who sit together [=priests] take pleasure,
    Indra do we invoke when the soma is pressed.
21. The gods have stretched for themselves a noteworthy sacrifice among the Trikadrukas.
    Just him [=Indra] let our hymns increase.

22. Let the drops enter you, like rivers the sea.
    Nothing surpasses you, Indra.
23. O wakeful bull, with your greatness you encompass the portion of soma
    that is in your belly, Indra.
24. Let the soma be fit for your cheek, o Indra, Vr̥tra-smiter,
    fit for your "fundament" the drops.

25. Śrutakakṣa ["Famous Armpit"] sings fit for a horse, fit for a cow,
    fit for the "fundament" [/bestowal] of Indra.
26. For fittingly you exert yourself when our soma drinks are pressed, Indra,
    fittingly for your giving, able one.
27. Even from a distance our hymns reach you, possessor of the stone.
    Let us go fittingly to you.

28. For as surely as you are one who acts the hero and as surely as you are a steadfast champion,
    just as surely is your thought to be realized—

29. Just as surely has your giving, powerfully liberal one, been ordained by all the Ordainers.
    And so, Indra, (you are) in partnership with me.
30. Do not become like an indolent formulator, o lord of prizes.
    Exhilarate yourself on the pressed soma accompanied by cows [=milk].

31. Let not (ill) intentions toward us guide us away from the sun into the nights, Indra.
    With you as yokemate, we would gain it.
32. With just you as yokemate, Indra, we would respond to the challengers.
    You are ours; we are yours.
33. For those seeking you, ever bellowing after you, will proceed just to you—
    your comrades, the bards, o Indra.

VIII.93 (702) Indra (except Indra and R̥bhus 34)

Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
34 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This long hymn begins with an address to the rising sun (vs. 1), which is echoed in the first verse of the second tr̥ca (vs. 4), and near its end are two verses directed to Agni (vss. 25–26). These paired addresses to other deities within an Indra hymn suggest the ritual context of a dawn soma sacrifice (though Dawn herself is not alluded to). Indeed, the soma offered to Indra is the dominant theme of the hymn, which becomes more insistent as the hymn progresses. Not surprisingly, mention of the aid and material wealth he will give in return for the soma is also not scanted.

Throughout the hymn Indra is especially celebrated as (best) Vr̥tra-smiter: the simple epithet and its superlative form occur an astonishing nine times, even though the myth itself is treated only sparingly (vss. 2, 7, 14–15).

As often, the tr̥cas become more tightly organized toward the end of the hymn, with a partial refrain in verses 25–27, and full-pāda refrains in 28–30 and 31–33, the latter being introduced (31a) by the same pāda that provides the refrain (31–33c). There are also intra- and inter-tr̥ca verbal echoes in these later verses. The separate final verse (34) mentioning the R̥bhus seems to have little or no connection to the rest of the hymn.

1. Up toward the bull whose bounty is famous, who performs manly work,
   toward the archer do you go, o Sun.
2. He who split the nine and ninety strongholds with his arm-strong (mace),
   and as Vr̥tra-smiter smote the serpent,
3. That Indra, propitious companion, will milk out for us (wealth) in horses, in cows, in grain,
   like (a cow) yielding a broad stream.

4. O Vr̥tra-smiter—whatever today you have risen over, o Sun,
   all that is under *your* will, Indra.
5. Or if, o lord of settlements grown strong, you think, "I shall not die,"
   just that comes true for you.
6. The soma drinks which have been pressed in the distance, which nearby,
   to all those do you go, Indra.

7. We incite this Indra to smite great Vr̥tra.
   He will become a bullish bull.
8. Indra is the one made for giving. Strongest is he when ensconced in exhilaration;
   brilliant is he who, deserving of soma, receives the (invitatory) call.
9. Like a mace equipped with a hymn, powerful, not to be budged,
   he has waxed high, not to be laid low.

10. Even in difficult going, make easy passage for us when you are hymned, o Indra who yearn for hymns,
    if you will so desire, bounteous one—
11. You whose aim, whose sovereignty they never confound—
    neither god, nor the exalted folk.
12. And the two goddesses, both the World-Halves,
    respect your unrepulsable forcefulness, o you of good lips.

13. You fixed this fast in the black (cows) and in the reddish ones,
    and in the gray ones—the gleaming white milk.
14. Then as all the gods strode away from the turbulent power of the serpent,
    the onslaught of the wild beast found them.
15. And after that he became a covering for me: the Vr̥tra-smiter displayed his masculine nature—
    he for whom no rival has been born, he who cannot be laid low.

16. Him famed as the best smiter of Vr̥tra, the propelling force of the settled peoples,
    do I inspire to great generosity to you (patrons).
17. (I inspired you, Indra,) with this visionary thought and with desire for cattle—o you of many names, praised by many—
    so that you appeared at every soma-pressing.
18. Let him be of attentive mind just toward us—the Vr̥tra-smiter possessing many pressed drinks.
    Let the able one listen to our prayer.

19. (Coming) with what help for us do you reach exhilaration, bull?
    With what (help) for the pressers? Bring it here!
20. In whose pressed soma does the bullish bull with his teams take pleasure,
    the Vr̥tra-smiter, for soma-drinking?

21. On reaching exhilaration, (bring) wealth in thousands to us.
    Become a provider to the pious man.

22. These pressed drinks here, accompanied by their wives [=waters], go eagerly in pursuit.
    Regularly coming, ever filling [?] is (the wave) of the waters.
23. The desirable [/offered] libations, strengthening Indra at the ceremony, have surged
    to his down-stroke with their power.
24. Hither let these two feasting companions, the pair of fallow bays with golden manes,
    convey (you) to the pleasure set out (for you).

25. For you have these soma drinks here been pressed and the ritual grass strewn, o you of radiant goods [=Agni].
    Convey Indra hither for the praisers—
26. (Agni,) as you diffuse your skill through the luminous realms and distribute treasures to the pious man.
    (All of you,) recite to Indra for the praisers.
27. I establish here your Indrian strength and set out all solemn words for you, o you of a hundred resolves.
    Be merciful, Indra, to the praisers.

28. Bring us every good thing, every refreshment and nourishment, o you of a hundred resolves,
    when you will show us mercy, Indra.
29. Bring us all welfare, o you of a hundred resolves,
    when you will show us mercy, Indra.
30. We who have pressed soma call upon just you, best smiter of Vr̥tra,
    when you will show us mercy, Indra.

31. Right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays—drive, o lord of exhilarating drinks—
    right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.
32. He who is known, now as before, as Indra, best smiter of Vr̥tra, possessing a hundred resolves—
    right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.
33. For you, Vr̥tra-smiter, are the drinker of these soma-drinks—
    right up to our pressed soma with your fallow bays.

34. Let Indra give us the wealth belonging to craft [/R̥bhu] as the craftsmaster [/R̥bhukṣan] for our refreshment.
    Let the prizewinner give a prizewinner.

VIII.94 (703) Maruts

Bindu Āṅgirasa or Pūtadakṣa Āṅgirasa
12 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn, focused on soma-drinking, is a curious mix of almost vapid simplicity and baffling obscurity. Although the Anukramaṇī assigns the whole hymn to the Maruts, it has several features that deviate markedly from the general pattern of Marut hymns. To begin with the clearest, the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) names a number of gods as drinkers of the soma being presented: not only the Maruts (vs. 4), but the Aśvins (vs. 4), Indra (vs. 6), and the Ādityas, both as a body (vs. 4) and separately (vs. 5). By contrast, in the remaining tr̥cas (vss. 7–9, 10–12) only the Maruts are mentioned, but they are several times qualified by epithets and actions that are ordinarily the province of other gods: for example, "having refined skill" (vss. 7 and 10), generally used of one or more of the Ādityas; "mountain-dwelling" (vs. 12), usually of Soma. Since the lexicon of Marut hymns is often tightly limited, this borrowing of attributes is somewhat remarkable. Similarly the cosmogonic acts of spreading out the cosmic realms (vs. 9) and propping apart the two world-halves (vs. 11) are Indra's signature deeds, not otherwise attributed to the Maruts.

It is the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) that is the most problematic, however. It ends (vs. 3c) exactly as the third tr̥ca ends (9c), and with a variant of the formula found in all three verses of the final tr̥ca (vss. 10–12), in all cases inviting "the Maruts to drink the soma." But the hymn begins with a paradox (vs. 1), a cow who herself sucks rather than giving suck, a cow identified as the mother of the Maruts and also, in a sharply different animal metaphor, as the draft-horse of their chariots. In the second verse this female figure seems to transform into, or be identified with, Aditi: "the lap of Aditi" is a common phrase. It is this idiom that gives some clue as to the intent of the first two verses. "The lap of Aditi" seems elsewhere to refer to the ritual ground, or some part of it or some vessel associated with it, and soma is prepared or deposited in this lap. The statement that "the gods cause their commandments to be upheld" in this lap is a way of saying that the ritual activities of mortals sacrificing to the gods keep the cosmos functioning, so that, for example, the sun and the moon can be seen. As for the first verse, Pr̥śni, the mother of the Maruts, is in a few mysterious passages (notably IV.5.7, 10) also apparently identified with some part of the ritual ground or equipment, and so Aditi (in "the lap of Aditi") and Pr̥śni can be superimposed on each other. If "the cow" of verse 1 is the ritual ground (or some part thereof or piece thereon) as Pr̥śni, she "sucks" by receiving the oblation, and she is the draft-horse of the Maruts' chariots in providing the occasion for their journey.

The identification of the Maruts' mother with Aditi in the first tr̥ca and the ascription to them of epithets and activities characteristic of other gods in the rest

of the hymn presumably stem from the same motive: to universalize the Maruts and make them a species of All Gods.

1. The cow herself takes suck, the fame-seeking mother of the bounteous Maruts;
   she is yoked as the draft-horse of their chariots,
2. She in whose lap all the gods cause their commandments to be upheld,
   for the sun and moon to be seen.
3. So then do all our bards sing them here, away from (the sacrifice of) the stranger—
   the Maruts to drink the soma.

4. Here it is—this pressed soma. They drink of it—the Maruts,
   and also the self-ruling ones [=Ādityas] and the Aśvins.
5. They drink—Mitra, Aryaman, Varuṇa—of the one purified in a continuous (stream),
   which possesses three seats and grants offspring.
6. And now at pleasure Indra (drinks) of it, of the pressed one with its cows [=milk-mixture];
   early in the morning he will become exhilarated like a Hotar.

7. Have the patrons [=Maruts] grown excited? Like the waters they rush beyond failures,
   the (Maruts) of refined skill.
8. Do I today choose the help of you gods, who are great
   and by nature of wondrous luster?
9. Those who spread all the earthly realms here and the luminous realms of heaven, (I call)
   the Maruts to drink the soma.

10. Just these of refined skill—you, o Maruts—from heaven I now call,
    to drink of this soma.
11. Just these, who propped apart the two world-halves, the Maruts I now call,
    to drink of this soma.
12. Just this, the bullish mountain-dwelling Marut flock, I now call,
    to drink of this soma.

Oldenberg collects the hymns 95–101 into a single group, despite the varying number of verses and the lack of other clear unifying features.

VIII.95 (704) Indra

Tiraścī Āṅgirasa
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, arranged in tr̥cas

A simple hymn in which the poet, who names himself in verse 4, both urges Indra to come to the soma sacrifice to enjoy the soma and the words of praise offered to him and exhorts his fellow celebrants to redouble their praises. The most notable feature of the hymn is the last tr̥ca (vss. 7–9), with its inescapable repetition of the word *śuddhá* "cleansed, washed," applied not merely to the soma but also to its verbal accompaniments, as well as to Indra and the help he will bring. This verb is not a standard part of soma vocabulary: it is used only once in Maṇḍala IX (IX.78.1), where it refers to the washing of the soma plant before its pressing. The verb is in general rare: almost all of its R̥gvedic attestations are found in the last three verses of this hymn. In the few other occurrences where the nature of the action can be determined, water is the agent, and it is clear that washing is the literal meaning of the verb and the metaphor deployed in this hymn.

1. Like a charioteer (his chariot), the songs have mounted you at the
 pressings, o you who long for songs.
 In unison they have bellowed to you, Indra, like mothers to their calf.
2. The clear pressed (soma drinks) have roused you hither, o Indra who
 long for songs.
 Drink of this stalk, Indra: it has been set for you among all (the clans).
3. Drink the soma for exhilaration, Indra, the pressed soma brought by the
 falcon,
 for you are the lord, the king of each and every clan.

4. Hear the call of Tiraścī, who honors you, Indra.
 Grant fullness of wealth in good heroes and in cows. You are great.
5. (Hear the call of Tiraścī,) who has begotten for you, Indra, a newer,
 invigorating hymn,
 a visionary thought stemming from a perceptive mind, an age-old vision
 swollen with truth.
6. Let us praise him—Indra, whom the songs and solemn words have
 strengthened.
 Seeking to gain them, may we win his many manly powers.

7. Come now! Let us praise Indra the cleansed with a cleansed sāman.
 Him grown strong through cleansed hymns let the cleansed (soma) with
 its milk-mixture exhilarate.
8. O Indra—cleansed, come here to us; (come) cleansed with cleansed help.
 Cleansed, lay down a foundation of wealth; cleansed, become
 exhilarated as the one deserving of soma.

9. For, o Indra, cleansed, (you lay down) wealth for us, cleansed, (you lay down) treasures for the pious man.
   Cleansed, you keep smashing obstacles, cleansed, you seek to gain the prize.

VIII.96 (705) Indra (except Maruts 14d, Indra and Bṛhaspati 15)

Tiraścī Āṅgirasa or Dyutāna Māruti
21 verses: triṣṭubh except virāj 4, arranged in tṛcas

A rich and complex hymn containing both glancing references and vivid treatments of several Indra myths. Its parts conform well to the tṛca structure, especially (as often) toward the end. Each of the last four tṛcas (vss. 10–21) has a verbal signature: in verses 10–12 the half-pāda refrain "surely he will take cognizance" (*kuvíd aṅgá védat*); in verses 13–15 the "droplet" (*drapsá*); in verses 16–18 the opening "you then" (*tuvám̐ ha tyád*); in verses 19–21 the definitional "Vṛtra-smiter" (*vṛtrahā́*).

The first tṛca of the hymn (vss. 1–3) sets the stage for the wide-ranging praise of Indra by describing his overwhelming power in three different areas. In verse 1 the powers of nature are subject to him. Verse 2 apparently contains a snatch of the Emuṣa myth, most extensively related in VIII.71. In that myth Indra shoots a boar named Emuṣa through many mountains; here only the mountains and the arrow-shot are mentioned, but the prodigious nature of the unnamed archer's action is clear, and the audience would be aware that this was a boyhood deed of Indra's. In verse 3 Indra's body is described as the site of his powers, both physical and mental.

The second tṛca (vss. 4–6) begins with a summary of his preeminence (vs. 4), but soon moves to the Vṛtra battle (vs. 5) and especially to the Maruts' role in it, a topic that will also occupy the third tṛca. The Maruts appear to be the "formulators" (*brahmán*s) introduced at the end of verse 5, bellowing to Indra. Verses 6–9 are best interpreted as the direct speech of the Maruts to Indra, offering him their praise while seeking an alliance with him. They remind him (vs. 7) that they stuck and continue to stick by him when the other gods deserted him in the Vṛtra battle, and they put in their claim to share the sacrifice with him (vs. 8), a claim also vividly dramatized in the dialogue hymn I.165. They end their speech (vs. 9) with the reassurance that together they, the Maruts and Indra, will make an unbeatable team.

The next tṛca (vss. 10–12) returns to the ritual present, with the poet's exhortation to himself to produce well-crafted words for Indra—whose attention to the praises he nervously hopes for. The following tṛca (vss. 13–15) is the most puzzling part of the hymn; it concerns an otherwise unknown story about a "droplet" (*drapsá*) or perhaps an individual (human? divine? semi-divine?) so named. There is a conflict of some sort in the Aṃśumatī River, which Indra appears to win in verse 15. The middle verse of the tṛca (vs. 14) is 1st-person direct speech and may be the

words of Indra addressing the Maruts. But the "story" may also be an extended ritual metaphor. "Droplet" is a word also used of soma, and the name of the river means literally "possessing (soma) plants." The descent of the droplet into the river could well describe the rinsing of the soma plant that forms a regular part of soma preparation, although the ritual counterpart of the mythic conflict is difficult to identify.

Unified by its opening words "you then," the next tṛca (vss. 16–18) provides a survey of some of Indra's great deeds, some obscure (like the rivalry with the unidentified seven in vs. 16), some familiar: the defeat of Śuṣṇa (17c), the release of the cows from Vala (17d), and the Vṛtra battle again (18). The last tṛca begins with a riddle, though not a very challenging one. The first three pādas of verse 19 give a series of definitional descriptors of a hero. Those asked the riddle give their answer to "the other," in our opinion the riddler himself: "That's the Vṛtra-smiter!" And they provide other embellishments to the Vṛtra-smiter in the following two verses (20–21), while declaring the need to invoke and praise him. The hymn thus keeps returning to the Vṛtra battle, and the final three verses implicitly assert that Vṛtra-smiter is Indra's fundamental role.

1. For him do the dawns pass along their course; for Indra do the eloquent evenings (pass along their course) by night.
   For him do the waters, the seven mothers, stand still—the rivers easy to cross, for men to traverse.
2. They were pierced through by the archer, though he wavered—the thrice seven backs of the mountains fitted firmly together.
   No god nor mortal could surpass this—(the deeds) that the bull, grown strong, performed.
3. The metal mace is an appendage of Indra; greatest power is in the two arms of Indra.
   The intentions of Indra are in his head exclusively; into his mouth they rush en masse, to (become speech) worthy to be heard.

4. I consider you the most worthy of the sacrifice of those worthy of the sacrifice; I consider you the stirrer of the unstirrable;
   I consider you the beacon of warriors, Indra; I consider you the bull of the settled domains.
5. When, o Indra, in your two arms you took the mace stirred by exhilaration, to smite the serpent,
   the mountains bellowed forth, and forth the cows, forth the formulators [=Maruts] approaching Indra.
6. [Maruts:] "Let us praise him, who begat all these creatures here below him.
   We would like to establish an alliance with Indra with our hymns; we would come near the bull with reverences."

7. [Maruts:] “Shrinking from the hissing of Vṛtra, all the gods who were your partners deserted you.
   Let your partnership be with the Maruts, Indra. Then you will win all these battles here.”
8. [Maruts:] “We, the thrice sixty Maruts, having increased you as ruddy throngs [=herds of cattle] increase, are deserving of the sacrifice.
   We reverently approach you. Make a share for us. We would honor your unbridled force with this oblation.”
9. [Maruts:] “Sharp is the weapon, the vanguard of the Maruts. (And) who dares venture against your mace, Indra?
   The lords lacking gods are weapon-less. With your wheel [=discus?] scatter them, possessor of the silvery drink.”

10. For the great, strong, powerful one, for the one most propitious to cattle send forth a well-twisted (hymn).
    Produce many hymns for Indra whose vehicle is songs, for his body. Surely he will take cognizance (of them)?
11. To him whose vehicle is hymns, to the far-ranging one send an inspired thought like (a boat) to the far shore of rivers with a wooden (paddle).
    Stroke the body of the famous, very enjoyable one with a visionary thought. Surely he will take cognizance (of it)?
12. Labor at what Indra will enjoy from you. Give as praise a good praise hymn. Seek to entice him here with reverence.
    Be attentive, singer. Don’t screech, but make your speech heard. Surely he will take cognizance (of it)?

13. The Droplet descended into the Aṃśumatī (River), the black one speeding with the ten thousand.
    Indra with his skill helped him as he blew. The manly minded one repelled the “blizzards” (of attacking warriors?).
14. “I saw the Droplet wandering in the oscillating eddy of the Aṃśumatī River,
    descending like a black cloud. I dispatch you, bulls. Fight in the contest.”
15. Then the Droplet held his body in the lap of the Aṃśumatī, as he glittered.
    With Bṛhaspati as yokemate, Indra overcame the godless clans as they attacked.

16. You then—just as you were being born, you became the rival to the seven unrivaled ones, Indra.
    You discovered heaven and earth, which were hidden. You provided joy to the wide-ranging creatures.

17. You then—emboldened, you smote the power without counterpart with your mace, mace-bearer.
 You brought low (the power) of Śuṣṇa with your murderous weapons. You found the cows just with your skill, Indra.
18. You then—bull of the settled domains, you became the forceful bane of obstacles.
 You released the rivers, which had been blocked. You conquered the waters whose husband was a Dāsa.

19. "He is the very resolute one, who is the enjoyer of the pressings, to whom the battle-fury has been conceded, who is like a rich man through (all) the days,
 who all alone is the performer of manly labors." "That's the Vr̥tra-smiter!" they respond to the other.
20. That's the Vr̥tra-smiter—Indra, sustainer of the settled domains. Him who is to be invoked would we invoke with a lovely praise hymn.
 He is our bounteous helper, our advocate. He is the giver of the prize deserving of fame.
21. That's the Vr̥tra-smiter—Indra, the master of the R̥bhus. As soon as he was born, he became one to be invoked.
 Performing many manly labors, like soma when drunk he is to be invoked by his comrades.

VIII.97 (706) Indra

Rebha Kāśyapa
15 verses: br̥hatī 1–9, atijagatī 10, upariṣṭādbr̥hatī 11–12, atijagatī 13, triṣṭubh 14, jagatī 15, arranged in tr̥cas

Though metrically complex and metrically disturbed, this hymn follows a familiar thematic pattern, with its contents structured by the tr̥ca division. In the first tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) the poet asks Indra to take possession of wealth belonging to other human lords, who do not follow proper ritual behavior, and to redistribute it to the ritualists of the poet's own group. The next tr̥ca (vss. 4–6), as often, calls on Indra to come to the sacrifice from wherever he happens to be. The hope for Indra's exclusive company and the fear that he might not come at all are balanced in the third tr̥ca (vss. 7–9). This tr̥ca has an unusual structure, with the first and last pādas of each verse identical, a type of very tight ring-composition.

Only in the following tr̥ca (vss. 10–12) does the poet turn to formal praise of the god (though vs. 9 serves as a transition), but these verses function almost as much as a praise of the praisers themselves. In verse 11 the mockingly designated "raspers" (*rebhá*), that is, the singers, especially the poet himself, whom the Anukramaṇī identifies as Rebha, make Indra strong through their praise. More strikingly, in verse 12 the poets "bend the felly" of his chariot just by looking at it, and make Indra

himself bow by their words; the point is surely that they thereby make Indra change the course of his journey and come to the sacrifice. In verse 10 an unidentified group both fashions and begets Indra; given the agents of the following verses, it is very tempting to assume that Rebha intends us to understand that it is the poets who fashioned and begot Indra (although the gods themselves, mentioned at the end of the previous verse, could also be the subject). In the last tr̥ca the poet combines praise of Indra's immense power with pleas for him to use it for our benefit.

1. The delights that you, the possessor of the sun, brought here from the (other) lords, o Indra,
   from that strengthen only your praiser, bounteous one, and those who have twisted the ritual grass for you.
2. What you have appropriated, Indra—the horse, the cow, and the ovine portion—
   confer that on the one who sacrifices, presses, and offers priestly gifts—not on the niggard.
3. He who slumbers sleepily not following the commandments, not following the gods, o Indra,
   through his own activities he will hinder his wealth from prospering. Put him far away from it.

4. Whether, able one, you are in the distance, whether nearby, Vr̥tra-smiter,
   from there he who has pressed soma seeks to attract you, Indra, with hymns as hairy-maned (horses) on heaven's way.
5. Or whether you are in the luminous realm of heaven or on the surface of the sea,
   whether in an earthly seat, best smiter of Vr̥tra, whether in the midspace—come here!
6. When our soma drinks are pressed, o soma-drinker, lord of power,
   bring yourself to exhilaration—with your liberal generosity, Indra, with wealth in profusion.

7. Don't shun us, Indra. Become our feasting companion.
   You—be there with help for us; just you—be friendship for us. Don't shun us, Indra.
8. Among us, Indra, at our pressing, sit down to drink the honey.
   Produce great help for the singer, bounteous one—among us, Indra, at our pressing.
9. The gods have not attained you, nor mortals, o possessor of the stone.
   You dominate all created things with your vast power. The gods have not attained you.

10. The superior man who is even more dominant over all battles—Indra have they jointly fashioned and begotten for ruling—
    most excellent in resolve and a hindrance in obstructing, strong, strongest, powerful, surpassing.

11. The "raspers" have cried out in unison to him, to Indra to drink of the soma,
so as to increase him, the lord of the sun. For he of steadfast commandments is united with strength and with help.
12. The inspired poets bend the felly just with their gaze and bow the ram [=Indra] with their cry.
Very bright, without deceit, along with your versifiers they (cry out) close to the ear of the surpassing one.

13. I constantly call on this Indra, bounteous, strong, unrepulsable, deploying his own powers in every way.
If the most munificent one, worthy of the sacrifice, will turn here because of our hymns, let the mace-bearer make all our pathways easy for wealth.
14. You, o Indra, perceive how to utterly destroy the strongholds with your strength, most powerful, able one.
In fear of you, mace-bearer, do all the worlds and both heaven and earth tremble.
15. Indra, brilliant champion, let this truth be protective for me. Carry us across manifold difficulties, as if across the waters.
When, King Indra, would you show us the favor of wealth, to be eagerly sought like the distillate of all mother's milk?

VIII.98 (707) Indra

Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa
12 verses: uṣṇih, except kakubh 7, 10–11, puraüṣṇih 9, 12, arranged in tr̥cas.

Although the hymn is composed in three different meters, each of the three meters consists of two pādas of eight syllables and one of twelve, just differently arranged, so that the hymn is more formally unified than the bare metrical synopsis suggests. It is arranged in tr̥cas, but not all the tr̥cas show unity of form or content. The second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) has a four-syllable refrain, and each verse of the last (vss. 10–12) begins with a form of "you" and contains the vocative "you of a hundred resolves," though not always in the same position. Otherwise there are no clear formal marks.

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with an exhortation to the ritualists to sing to Indra, and the second tr̥ca begins (vs. 4) with a complementary request to Indra to come to the sacrifice, but most of the rest of the first six verses is devoted to generalized praise of Indra. In the third tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) the ritualists mobilize their verbal resources to strengthen Indra and bring him to the sacrifice, and in the last tr̥ca (vss. 10–12), as usual, the poet then states our requests, here for battle strength and fighting heroes rather than wealth.

1. To Indra sing a sāman, a lofty one to the lofty inspired poet,
   to the creator of the foundations, who is attentive to poetic inspiration, inviting admiration.
2. You, Indra, are the dominator; you caused the sun to shine.
   Accomplishing all deeds, controlling all the gods, you are great.
3. Flashing forth (like) the sun with its light, you went to the luminous realm of heaven.
   The gods yielded themselves to partnership with you, Indra.

4. Come here to us, Indra, as the dear, entirely victorious one, who cannot be concealed,
   broad on all sides like a mountain—as lord of heaven.
5. For, you real drinker of soma, you dominate both world-halves.
   Indra, you are the strengthener of the soma-presser—as lord of heaven.
6. For you, Indra, are the splitter of each and every stronghold,
   the smiter of the Dasyu, the strengthener of Manu—as lord of heaven.

7. For therefore, o Indra who yearns for hymns, we have sent our great desires surging to you
   as those who come with waters [=Maruts] do their waters.
8. Like water with its floods, our sacred formulations are strengthening you, o champion,
   even though you have already grown strong day by day, o possessor of the stone.
9. With a song they yoke the two fallow bays of the vigorous one to the broad chariot with its broad yoke,
   the two conveyors of Indra, yoked by speech.

10. Indra, bring here to us strength and manly power, you unbounded one of a hundred resolves,
    bring here a hero victorious in battle.
11. For you are our father, o good one of a hundred resolves, you our mother.
    And therefore we beg for your favor.
12. To you who seek the prize do I appeal, you tempestuous much-invoked one of a hundred resolves.
    Grant us a mass of good heroes.

VIII.99 (708) Indra

Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa
8 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas

As often, an invitation to the soma sacrifice begins the hymn (vss. 1–2), but it then continues directly to the topic of Indra's giving (vss. 3–4), which often ends hymns. The poet expresses his hope for goods somewhat indirectly, in a curious simile about

getting cooked in the sun (vs. 3) and in the complex negative constructions of verse 4. The references to the same time yesterday (vs. 1) and to the apparent rebirth, that is, the regular rising, of the sun (vs. 3) suggest that the setting is the dawn ritual, when priestly gifts are distributed.

The second half of the hymn (vss. 4–8) is the praise hymn proper, with emphasis on Indra's irresistible might in battle. The changes rung on the root *tṝ* "overcome" as well as the balanced oppositions (of the type "who X-es but is not X-ed") and parallelisms (e.g., the recurrence of *-tar-* agent nouns) give this portion of the hymn a high rhetorical polish.

1. At this time yesterday these fervent men made you drink,
 o mace-bearer.
 Listen here to those whose vehicle is the praise song, Indra; come right
 up to the good pasture.
2. Become exhilarated, you well-lipped possessor of the fallow bays: we
 beseech you for this. The ritual adepts attend to you.
 Yours are the utmost claims to fame deserving of hymns at our pressings,
 o Indra who yearn for song.

3. As those who "get cooked" [=become warm/fervent] share in the sun,
 they share in all (the goods) of Indra.
 When he [=the Sun?] who has been born before is being born (again) with
 strength, we direct our thoughts toward goods, as if toward our share.
4. Praise the giver of goods, whose presents are not harmful. The presents
 of Indra are beneficial.
 He does not take umbrage at the desire of a man who does honor, as he
 bestirs his mind for giving.

5. O Indra, at the battle-charges you dominate all contenders.
 You are the smiter of maledictions, the begetter, the all-overcomer.
 Overcome those who seek to overcome.
6. The two "opponents" [=Heaven and Earth] follow after your gusting in
 its headlong rush, like two parents after their child.
 All contenders go slack before your battle fury, when you overcome
 Vṛtra, Indra.

7. For you (people) (we invoke) the one with enduring help, the unaging
 driver who cannot be driven,
 the swift victor, impeller, best of charioteers, the strengthener of the
 Tugryas who cannot be overcome—
8. The one who sets right but needs no setting right, made by might, of a
 hundred forms of help and a hundred resolves,
 common (to all)—Indra do we invoke for help, the possessor of goods,
 speeder of goods.

VIII.100 (709) Indra (1–9, 12), Vāc (10–11)

Nema Bhārgava (1–3, 6–12), Indra (4–5)
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6, anuṣṭubh 7–9

A vivid but baffling hymn, consisting in great part of snatches of dialogue or direct speech that may or may not be connected with each other. Needless to say, it has been much discussed and disagreed upon, and our own interpretation of it is not entirely secure.

The first two verses are a brief dialogue between an unidentified speaker and his addressee, Indra. The first speaker demands that Indra obtain a portion of the sacrifice for him before he will assist Indra in his deeds (vs. 1). In verse 2 Indra promises him the soma and proposes an active partnership. The first speaker has been variously identified, but we are in agreement with Oldenberg (*Noten* ad loc.), inter alia, that it is Vāyu, the god who along with Indra receives the first soma-offering at the soma sacrifice. (The word *ágre* "at the beginning" in vs. 2 gives strong support to this view.)

Thus we seem to have embarked, in *mythical* time, on the *ritual* day of real time. Such blending of mythical and current ritual time is not uncommon. And, in our view, what happens next, in the next snatch of dialogue (vss. 3–6), is the emergence of the real-time ritualist. A singer (who may, or may not, be named Śarabha [vs. 6]), addresses his colleagues (vs. 3), urging them to praise Indra, even as he raises doubts about Indra's existence—doubts that Indra counters directly (vs. 4) by his epiphany and self-praise. The scene has shifted from the mythical dialogue between Indra and Vāyu to the ritual dialogue between Indra and the singer.

Indra continues to speak in verse 5, though the contents of the speech are rather unclear. In our view the verse concerns the relationship between Indra and the Maruts, often called Indra's "companions" (*sákhāyaḥ*) as here, and the verse is here both because of the progress of the ritual day and because of an association of ideas with verses 1–2. The second or Midday Pressing of the soma sacrifice is dedicated to Indra and the Maruts, but the Maruts' share of the pressing was only established mythically when they reminded Indra of their help to him in the Vṛtra battle and demanded from him a share in the soma—a scene effectively dramatized in the famous hymn I.165. Thus, we have moved from the Morning Pressing with Indra and Vāyu to the Midday Pressing with Indra and the Maruts, and the covert thematic connection is that both Vāyu and the Maruts demanded a share of the sacrifice from Indra. What makes the mental association even more complex is the fact that in verse 5 Indra remains in dialogue with the singer, while remembering and recounting to the singer his side of a dialogue with the Maruts. In any case the singer is now convinced of Indra's reality and declares that Indra's deeds are to be praised.

The following three verses (7–9) in dimeter meter (as opposed to the trimeter meter of the rest of the hymn) are in our opinion the contents of the singer's praise hymn to Indra, highlighting the Vr̥tra battle (vss. 7 and 9) and the falcon's theft of soma for Indra (vs. 8). But, not surprisingly, the narration is far from straightforward. Most strikingly, in verse 7 there is a further layer of ventriloquism: in this verse the singer imitates the speech of yet another speaker, a witness or participant in the Vr̥tra battle, urging the waters, freed by Indra's slaying of Vr̥tra, to flow forth. The speaker whom the singer is quoting might be Indra, speaking of himself in the 3rd person or perhaps the Maruts. But in either case we the audience are three levels down: we are listening to the hymn's poet (supposedly Nema Bhārgava) imitating an unnamed singer in dialogue with Indra, and the singer is in turn imitating Indra or some other eyewitness of the mythical scene. The following verse (8) returns to straight narration, of the falcon's flight with the soma. In verse 9 we are back to the Vr̥tra battle, but notably the description is in the present tense, as if still from the point of view of an eyewitness, and it depicts a curious, indeed unprecedented episode, Indra's mace lying covered with water—a scene that reminds us of the dead Vr̥tra, who is famously described as lying defeated with the waters streaming over him in I.32.8, 10.

As complex and uncertain as our reading of these first nine verses is, the following two verses (10–11) are considerably more mystifying. It is not that the language or the content is difficult in itself; the verses concern the goddess Speech (Vāc) and present the common image of Speech as a milk-cow (vss. 10–11) and the common theme of the four divisions of speech (vs. 10). The perplexing part is why Vāc should make her appearance at this point in the hymn. The best answer to this question was given by Oldenberg well over a century ago (1885): he cited a story in later Vedic prose (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa IV.1.3) relating a dispute between Indra and Vāyu after the Vr̥tra battle. Vāyu, as the swiftest god, was sent to make certain that Vr̥tra was dead, and he was rewarded with the first offering. Indra wanted a share of it (thus the opposite of the issue in our first two verses) and promised Vāyu in return that speech would be intelligible. The two gods then wrangled over their proper shares, and Indra received only a quarter, not the half he was expecting. Therefore he decreed that only a quarter of speech would be intelligible. The details of the story match in many ways those in the two verses in question, and it may well be that with these verses we return to the beginning of our hymn and the bargaining between Vāyu and Indra, in a sort of thematic ring composition. However, the Brāhmaṇa story is narratively confused and, as just noted, assigns the roles of petitioner and share-giver exactly opposite. It could therefore also be an after-the-fact attempt to rationalize the peculiarities of this part of the R̥gvedic hymn. We reserve judgment, and also point out that the cow in association with speech is celebrated at the end of the next hymn (VIII.101.15–16).

And then there is the final verse, addressed to Viṣṇu and echoing the first two verses verbally: the initial vocative "comrade" matches Indra's offer of comradeship to Vāyu in verse 2c, and the promise "we two will smite Vr̥tra [/the obstacle]" matches the almost identical phrase in 2d "we two will keep smashing obstacles." The close similarity of these verses led Geldner to assume that Viṣṇu is the speaker in verse 1, not Vāyu. In our opinion this assumption is unnecessary. We think rather that the final verse is an attempt to identify Viṣṇu with Vāyu, or to transform the older god Vāyu (who has a good Indo-Iranian pedigree) into the emergent and increasingly important god Viṣṇu, whose roots are not so deep.

Like many late R̥gvedic hymns, the difficulties here lie not in the language or the imagery, as is the case in earlier hymns. A major question in this hymn is what ties all the parts together. If we are correct that the first nine verses mark the progress from the morning to the midday rituals, via the gods (Vāyu, Maruts) associated with Indra at those occasions and their negotiations with Indra about their sacrificial share, *and* if Oldenberg is correct that the verses concerning Speech (vss. 10–11) conceal the story about the dispute between Indra and Vāyu after the Vr̥tra slaying, then we confront two different and superficially contradictory possibilities of hymnic unity. On the one hand, it may be a *ritual* unity—the progress of the ritual day—but then the Speech part awkwardly returns us to the beginning of the day. Or it may be a *mythological* unity, with the Vr̥tra battle viewed from different angles by different participants—but this leaves the ritual real time, with the prominent role of the singer, out of consideration. It is possible, but extremely speculative, that the final Viṣṇu verse gives us a way to reconcile these two approaches. As we have noted frequently elsewhere, the Third Pressing of the soma sacrifice was most likely a ritual innovation, slowly adopted by various clans at different times through the R̥gvedic period and after. Viṣṇu's most famous deed, the most prominent theme associated with him in the R̥gveda, is the cosmogonic taking of "three strides," which define and measure out the three worlds. It is possible that because of his association of "three," the introduction of Viṣṇu at the end of this hymn brings us to the end of the new *ritual* day, to the Third Pressing, while maintaining the *mythic* focus on the Vr̥tra slaying.

We do not claim to have solved the manifold difficulties of this hymn, but we hope that readers can still enjoy and respond to the intense directness of the dialogues and the stimulating if destabilizing rapidity of the transitions from one vignette to another.

1. [Vāyu:] "Here I go with my body before you. All the gods advance
   toward me from behind.
   When you will have secured a portion for me, Indra, only after that will
   you perform manly deeds along with me."

2. [Indra:] "I establish a draught of the honey for you at the beginning (of the sacrifice). Let the pressed soma be established as your portion,
   and you will be my comrade on my right side. Then we two will keep smashing obstacles in abundance."
3. [Singer:] "Proffer praise as you all seek the prize—real praise to Indra, if he is the real thing.
   'Indra does not exist,' so says many a one. 'Who has seen him? Whom shall we praise?'"
4. [Indra:] "Here I am, singer: see me here. I dominate all created things with my greatness.
   The instructions of truth [=hymns] strengthen me. As the one who keeps breaking open (Vala), I keep breaking the worlds.
5. [Indra:] "When the trackers of truth mounted to me, sitting alone on the back of the delightful one [=fallow bay/soma?],
   my mind just responded from the heart: 'My comrades have cried out (to me) like children.'"
6. [Singer:] "All these (deeds) of yours are to be proclaimed at the pressings, those which you did, bounteous Indra, for the presser—
   when you uncovered the goods, stemming from afar, brought together by many, for Śarabha of seers' lineage."

7. [Singer:] "'Now, (waters,) run forth each separately: he who obstructed you is not here.
   Indra has let fly his mace down onto Vr̥tra's mortal place.'
8. [Singer:] "Going at the speed of thought, it crossed the metal stronghold [=sky?].
   The fine-feathered (falcon), having gone to heaven, brought the soma to the mace-bearer.
9. [Singer:] "Within the sea it lies—the mace covered over with water.
   Streaming forth in front continuously, they [=waters] bring it tribute."

10. When Speech, saying indistinguishable things, sat down as gladdening ruler of the gods,
    she milked out in four (streams) nourishment and milk drinks. Where indeed did the highest of hers go?
11. The gods begat goddess Speech. The beasts of all forms speak her.
    Gladdening, milking out refreshment and nourishment for us, let Speech, the milk-cow, come well praised to us.

12. Comrade Viṣṇu, stride out widely. Heaven, grant a place for the mace to prop apart.
    We two will smite Vr̥tra; we two will give leave to the rivers. Let them, unleashed, go at the impetus of Indra.

VIII.101 (710) Various Gods: Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5c), Ādityas (5d-6), Aśvins (7–8), Vāyu (9–10), Sūrya (11–12), Uṣas (or Praise of the Sun's Radiance) (13), Pavamāna (14), Cow (15–16)

Jamadagni Bhārgava
16 verses: br̥hatī 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13; satobr̥hatī 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12; gāyatrī 3; triṣṭubh 14–16, arranged (for the most part) in pragāthas.

As the above summary of the deities and the meters demonstrates, this hymn is structurally quite complex, and indeed it may consist of several original hymns. (See Oldenberg 1888: 218 n. 1.) The divisions we see are somewhat at variance with the Anukramaṇī's analysis. The first six verses appear to belong together, with two pragāthas (vss. 1–4) to Mitra and Varuṇa and a third (vss. 5–6) expanding to include the Ādityas in general, the three best known (Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman) named and the rest subsumed under the title "kings." The focus is on the gods' journey to the sacrifice and the praise presented to them there, save for the second pragātha (vss. 3–4), which gives a notable description of Mitra and Varuṇa's missile and the threat it poses.

There follow a pragātha to the Aśvins (vss. 7–8) and one to Vāyu (vss. 9–10), focused even more strongly on their journeys to the sacrifice. The following pragātha to the Sun (vss. 11–12) contains some of the most flat-footed verses in the R̥gveda; it is hard to tell whether the poet's inspiration gave out, or if there is some deeper purpose that escapes the modern reader.

In our opinion the praise of divinities stops here, and the remainder of the hymn (vss. 13–16) depicts the ritual moment. In verse 13 an oblation of butter or some other milk product is poured into the fire by the priests; verse 14 (the most difficult verse in the hymn) appears to concern the offering of soma. The final two verses (15–16) exalt the cow, who appeared briefly in verse 13, in the most extravagant terms, as kin to major groups of gods, source of immortality, and a goddess associated with speech. This association (vs. 16) reminds us of the somewhat intrusive presence of the goddess Speech as a milk-cow at the end of the immediately preceding hymn (VIII.100.10–11).

1. That mortal has labored just so for the conclave of the gods, each one by one,
   who has now brought Mitra and Varuṇa here for their preeminence, for our giving of oblations.
2. The two possessing highest dominion and broad vision, superior men, kings of longest fame,
   with their wondrous skill as if with their arm-strength they drive their chariot, together with the rays [/reins] of the sun.

3. Who ran forth as your quick messenger, o Mitra and Varuṇa,
   copper-headed, hasty in his exuberance,

4. Who does not come to rest to negotiate, nor to be called back, nor to come to agreement—
from collision with that one deliver us today, deliver us with your two arms.

5. (Sing) forth for Mitra, forth for Aryaman, o you rich in truth,
a speech, a companionable, pleasurable, protective praise song—sing to Varuṇa, to the kings.
6. They rouse their own ruddy, noble treasure, the single son of the three (mothers) [=Agni].
They, undeceivable, watch over the immortal foundations for mortals.

7. (Drive) here to my upraised speeches, the most brilliant ones that are to be performed—
drive, Nāsatyas, both of one accord, to make tracks toward the oblations.
8. When we call to you for your giving without animus, you two rich in prize mares,
come, advancing the advancing ritual offering, you superior men, as you are sung by Jamadagni.

9. Drive here to our sacrifice that touches heaven, Vāyu, with the well-disposed (gods).
(The one soma drink) within the sieve above is being mixed; this pure (soma) here has been held out to you.
10. The Adhvaryu pursues (you) along the straightest paths, (for you) to receive the oblations.
Then, teamster, drink of both of ours—the pure soma and the one mixed with milk.

11. Yes indeed! you are great, Sūrya; yes indeed! Āditya, you are great.
The greatness of you who are great attracts admiration. Certainly, god, you are great.
12. Yes indeed! Sūrya, you are great in fame; in every way, god, you are great.
Because of his greatness the lordly one was set in front for the gods, as the extensive undeceivable light.

13. Here is the one [=butter offering] who is heading downward, accompanied by chants, her form created by a ruddy (cow).
Like brilliant (Dawn) she has appeared opposite, coming hither within the ten arms.
14. Three offspring [=soma-drinks/pressings] have made their traversal (of the filter); the others have settled down around the chant.
Loftily he has stood among the creatures; the self-purifying (soma) has entered within the golden (flames).

15. Mother of the Rudras, daughter of the Vasus, sister of the Ādityas,
    navel of immortality—
    I now proclaim to observant people: do not smite the blameless
    cow—Aditi.
16. Knowing speech, rousing speech, reverently approaching with all
    visionary thoughts,
    the goddess, coming hither from the gods, the cow—*let not a
    small-witted mortal appropriate me.

The final group of hymns consists of 102–103, dedicated to Agni.

VIII.102 (711) Agni

Prayoga Bhārgava or Agni Pāvaka Bārhaspatya or Agni Gr̥hapati Sahasaḥ Sūnu and Agni Yaviṣṭha Sahasaḥ Sūnu (together or one or the other)
22 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

For most of its length, this hymn is a conventional treatment of Agni's ritual activities, but with particular stress on his role as *kaví* "poet" or "sage poet" (vss. 1, 5, 17, 18). In general there is little internal unity in the tr̥cas, and indeed the third tr̥ca (vss. 7–9) is particularly disjointed, making a false start with two unconnected sentence fragments (vs. 7), followed by a purpose clause with no main clause (vs. 8). However, the second tr̥ca (vss. 4–6) has a refrain, and a curious one at that: "Agni, whose garment is the sea." This description probably references several different Agni themes: his identification and ultimate merging with Apām Napāt "Child of the Waters" (see esp. II.35); the myth about Agni's flight from his ritual duties, in which he hides in the waters; and the sprinkling of the fire with consecrated water in the Agnihotra, a ritual action also referred to in verse 14, where the associated act of laying ritual grass around the fire is also mentioned. Verse 14 may also recall Agni's flight and his concealment in the waters.

The conventional hymn appears to end with the sixth tr̥ca (vss. 16–18), solemnly treating the generation and installation of Agni as the conveyor of both the gods and the oblations. The next tr̥ca (vss. 19–21) has a light and self-deprecating tone. The poet claims to have neither of the barebones requisites for even a simple offering to Agni, a cow for the oblation and wood to feed his flames (vs. 19). All he has is "something like this"—namely the hymn he has just produced. This is clearly false modesty, and indeed the poet treats the standard wood and ghee rather slightingly in the next two verses (20–21). In the final appended verse (22, not part of a tr̥ca), he proudly pronounces that a man should kindle Agni with his mind and his vision (not, the implication is, with mere wood and ghee), and indeed that he has just done so.

1. You, Agni, establish lofty vitality for your pious server, god,
   as sage poet, houselord, youth.
2. Along with the one [=offering ladle] who reverently invokes the gods,
   who offers friendship to them, o far-radiant Agni,
   as observant one, convey them here to us.
3. With you as best inciting yokemate, o youngest one,
   we become dominant to win the prize.

4. Like Aurva and Bhr̥gu, like Apnavāna, I call upon the gleaming one,
   upon Agni, whose garment is the sea.
5. I call upon the sage poet, whose rush is the wind's, upon his might,
   whose roar is thunder's,
   upon Agni, whose garment is the sea.
6. As if upon the stimulus of Savitar, upon the benefit of Bhaga,
   I call upon
   Agni, whose garment is the sea.

7. Toward Agni, the strengthening one, best of many for your
   ceremonies...
   for the mighty child (of might)...
8. So that this (Agni) here will be at hand for us, as Tvaṣṭar is at hand for
   the forms to be crafted,
   with his will—the will of this glorious one...
9. This Agni here is master over all the splendors among the gods.
   He will come near to us here with prizes.

10. Praise here the most glorious of all Hotars,
    Agni, foremost at the sacrifices,
11. Sharp, pure-flamed, who shines preeminent in the houses,
    of longest fame.
12. Sing him, o poet, like a winning steed, the tempestuous one,
    who arranges the peoples in their places, like Mitra.

13. Those akin [=waters?], constantly directing to you the hymns of him
    who prepares the oblation,
    have approached you in front of Vāyu.
14. Whose ritual grass still stands uncut, not yet triply bundled—
    even his footprint you waters have deposited.
15. The footprint of the generous god, with his unassailable forms of help, is
    an auspicious sight, like the sun.

16. O god Agni, heating up with your flame through visions of ghee,
    convey the gods hither and sacrifice to them.
17. The mothers, the gods begot you, the sage poet, o Aṅgiras,
    as immortal conveyor of the oblation.

18. You, o sage Agni, a discerning messenger worthy to be chosen,
    have they installed as conveyor of the oblation.

19. Because I have no cow, nor an axe in a wooden (tree),
    I therefore bring just a thing like this to you.
20. When, Agni, we set any pieces of wood whatsoever in you,
    enjoy them, youngest one.
21. What the little termite eats, what the ant creeps over,
    let all that be ghee for you.

22. Kindling Agni with his mind, the mortal should follow his visionary thought.
    I have kindled Agni with the dawning lights.

VIII.103 (712) Agni (1–13), Agni and the Maruts (14)

Sobhari Kāṇva
14 verses: br̥hatī 1–4, 6; virāḍrūpā 5; satobr̥hatī 7, 9, 11, 13; kakubh 8, 12; gāyatrī 10; anuṣṭubh 14. One tr̥ca (1–3), 5 pragāthas (4–13), final verse (14).

Another metrically complex hymn, consisting mostly of pragāthas in various combinations of meters, but beginning with a tr̥ca (vss. 1–3) and ending with a single verse (14). Proferes (2007: 38–40) argues that the opening tr̥ca concerns the forging of a unified power from multiple clans by commitment to their mutually worshiped fire, which is identified as belonging to Divodāsa, the great Bharata leader (vs. 2). The territorial expansion and the overcoming of other populations therein are treated in verses 2–3.

Though the pragātha that follows (vss. 4–5) does not explicitly continue the theme of victory through centralized leadership, it does promise rewards to the man who devotes himself to Agni—particularly the renowned "imperishable fame" (*ákṣiti śrávaḥ*, vs. 5), a phrase whose Indo-European antiquity has been known and discussed for a century and a half. And "heroic glory" (*vīrávad yáśaḥ*, vs. 9), as well as goods and protection, are the rewards for service to Agni in the following pragāthas (vss. 6–11). The final pragātha (vss. 12–13) seeks to avert Agni's anger. In the summary verse (14) the poet names himself and invites Agni to the sacrifice.

1. He has just appeared, the best pathfinder, in whom they have established the commandments.
   Right up to him just born, the increaser of the Ārya, to Agni have our hymns reached.
2. The Fire allied to Divodāsa (has gone) forth, as if (all the way) to the gods with his might.
   He has unrolled himself along Mother Earth; he has taken his stand on the back of the firmament.

3. Before whom the communities tremble, as he performs (deeds) to be constantly acclaimed,
   the one who by himself wins thousands as if at the winning of wisdom—serve Agni with insightful thoughts.

4. The mortal whom you wish to lead forward for wealth, who does pious service for you, good one,
   he acquires a hero who proclaims solemn speech, who fosters a thousand by himself, o Agni.
5. With a steed he bores through to the prize even in the stronghold; he acquires imperishable fame.
   In you among the gods might we always acquire all things of value, o you of many goods.

6. He who distributes all goods, the gladdening Hotar of the peoples—
   like the cups of honey that go first to him, the praises go forth to Agni.
7. Those of good gifts, seeking the gods, groom (you), the charioteer (of the ceremonies), like a horse, with hymns.
   Deliver both our progeny and our posterity (to safety), o wondrous clanlord; deliver (to us) the generosity of the bounteous ones.

8. Sing forth to the most munificent one, to truthful, lofty, pure-flamed
   Agni, o Upastutas.
9. The bounteous one will gain heroic glory (for us)—he who is brilliant when kindled and bepoured.
   Surely his benevolence will come here to us anew along with prizes?

10. O Āsāva, praise the dearest of the dear ones, the guest,
    Agni, the controller of chariots,
11. The one deserving the sacrifice who at sunrise, as finder of tied-down goods, will turn them hither,
    whose waves [=flames] are difficult to cross, like the waves in a torrent, when he seeks to win the prize with his insightful thought.

12. Let the guest not be angry at us, this good Agni, proclaimed by many,
    who is the good Hotar of good ceremony.
13. And let those not suffer harm who (approach you) with invitations here in sundry ways, o good Agni.
    For even a weakling reverently invokes you for a mission if he is a man of good ceremony who has bestowed the oblation.

14. O Agni, drive here, as comrade of the Maruts, along with the Rudras, for soma-drinking.
    (Drive) to the good praise of Sobhari. Make yourself euphoric in the presence of Svarṇara.

Volume III

IX

Maṇḍala IX

The IXth Maṇḍala is the only major grouping in the R̥gveda devoted to a single ritual procedure. It consists of 114 hymns dedicated to Soma Pavamāna, "self-purifying Soma." It treats the deified ritual substance, the exhilarating drink soma, whose preparation and offering are the focus of the most important Vedic ritual, the soma sacrifice, but it treats that substance at only a single episode in the whole elaborate sacrifice, the time when the soma juice, which has already been pressed, is poured across the sheep's fleece that serves to "purify" it—that is, to remove the vegetable detritus still present in the liquid—before it is first diluted with water, then mixed with milk, and poured into the offering vessels. (For more detailed treatment of the ritual procedures involved see, e.g., Geldner's introduction to this maṇḍala and Oberlies 1999.)

There are no other hymns to Soma Pavamāna in the R̥gveda and only a few to Soma in his other aspects (I.91, VIII.48, VIII.79, X.25, as well as a few dedicated to Soma and another god [e.g., Soma and Rudra I.43, Agni and Soma I.93]). Judging from this absence, as well as from the data provided by the poets named by the Anukramaṇī, it is clear that many of the hymns in the maṇḍala were extracted from the original bardic collections and assembled in this liturgically oriented collection, while other hymns in the maṇḍala were composed by younger poets. The beginnings of the construction of a pan-Ārya sacrificial system, superseding the separate and competing clan rites—a construction that led to the middle Vedic śrauta ritual system—can be discerned in various composite hymns, especially IX.67.

It is little short of remarkable that the R̥gvedic bards could take this ritual snapshot, consisting of what seems like extremely unpromising material, and make it into high poetry not once, but 114 times, and even the most devoted Vedicist approaches this maṇḍala with some trepidation and with fear of the ennui to be induced by endless repetition of a few ritual tropes. What is truly surprising is that the poets for the most part managed to create an extraordinary variety of approaches to this limited theme, and, for readers interested in how the traditional poets of antiquity used all their ingenuity and poetic resources to trick out and ring changes on an invariant topic, the IXth Maṇḍala serves as a sort of laboratory to observe these skills in action. The hymns in the latter part of the

maṇḍala in trimeter meter especially display this richness of approach, but even the sixty-seven hymns in the short (24 syllables per verse) gāyatrī meter are very different from each other.

One of the ways in which the poets imbue this ritual moment with gravity beyond the simple facts of the procedure is by animatizing all the elements deployed in the procedure and making them *actors*, rather than inert things acted upon. The soma juice is configured as Soma, king and god, making a royal progress across the filter to his rendezvous with the gods. Or he is a powerful charging bull, or a swift racehorse, or a bird in flight. The fleece filter is a ewe; the milk is regularly conceived of as a herd of cows, eager to mate with the bull Soma. These ritual elements are also given cosmic dimensions. Soma is a pillar between heaven and earth; the sheep's fleece is the whole surface of the earth or of heaven; the waters for dilution are a vast sea into which the waves of soma empty themselves; the milk in its gleaming brightness is the sun or the day-lit sky. Once they have assumed these other poetic identities, the elements of the ritual then participate in still other metaphors and images that stretch those identities further. And the identities shift constantly within even brief hymns. In short, although it may be difficult to love the Soma Maṇḍala, it provides an almost ideal lesson in how to construct traditional poetry. However, in order to appreciate the artistry and the distance between the real subject and its ennobling verbal treatment, it is necessary to keep the physical facts of the ritual always in view; we have emphasized these regularly in the introductions to the individual hymns. For a close study of the imagery, form, and composition of the soma hymns, see Oberlies (1999).

The maṇḍala is organized by meter, with the majority of the hymns in the dimeter gāyatrī meter (IX.1–67), followed by smaller collections of trimeter—jagatī (68–86) and triṣṭubh (87–97)—then anuṣṭubh (98–101), uṣṇih (102–106), pragātha structures (107–108), ending with miscellaneous meters (109–114). Within each metrical group the hymns are arranged by length, from longest to shortest. Although the gāyatrī, jagatī, and triṣṭubh collections end with some very long hymns, these "hymns" can easily be deconstructed into smaller hymns containing the correct number of verses. For example, the jagatī group ends with two apparently nonconforming hymns. After a long series of five-verse hymns (IX.75–84) we find IX.85 at twelve verses and IX.86 at forty-eight. But IX.85 can be broken down into three four-verse hymns and IX.86 into sixteen tr̥cas (three-verse groupings). The longest hymn in the R̥gveda is the final hymn of the triṣṭubh group, IX.97 with fifty-eight verses, divisible into tr̥cas (with a final, extra verse).

Gāyatrī Hymns: 1–67

IX.1 (713) Soma Pavamāna

Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
10 verses: gāyatrī

The poet to whom the Anukramaṇī ascribes this hymn has the same name as the poet of the first collection of hymns in the R̥gveda: Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra is the author named for I.1–11 (and a descendant, Jetar Mādhuchandasa, for I.12). It is possible that in the absence of a known author the Anukramaṇī simply borrowed the name for this first hymn; in fact, the first four hymns of the IXth Maṇḍala are attributed to the first four authors of Maṇḍala I. On the other hand, the Soma Pavamāna hymns of the first four poets of Maṇḍala I may have been selected to begin the Soma Maṇḍala in order to provide an ordered framework.

The command "purify yourself" (*pávasva*) is the first word of the second pāda of this hymn and sets the theme for the entire maṇḍala: "self-purifying" soma. This first verse also introduces the necessary complement to this self-purifying soma, namely the consumer of soma par excellence, Indra. Thus the verse encapsulates in its simplicity the endlessly repeated and often monotonous concerns of the maṇḍala. The second verse alludes to the technical details of soma's preparation, another topic that will preoccupy the hymns to follow. Soma's powers to benefit men and gods directly are the subject of verses 3–5, while his power to stimulate Indra to do the same, an indirect benefit for both populations, closes the hymn (vs. 10).

Verses 6–9 contain more idiosyncratic material, a catalogue of female beings who aid in the preparation of soma. True, both the fingers that perform the pressing, metaphorically described in verses 7–8, and the cows that provide the milk to mix with soma (vs. 9) are common denizens of soma hymns, but the Daughter of the Sun is not: she otherwise appears in the IXth Maṇḍala only almost at the end, in IX.113.3. It is unclear what her role is here; perhaps she signals the Morning Pressing. Moreover, the "skin pipe" blown by the maidens in verse 8 is somewhat puzzling; on the basis of other passages (I.117.21 and VII.89.2) it appears to be a musical instrument, but how this image is meant to apply to soma (perhaps the stalk?) and how the fingers can also "blow" is not clear.

In short, most of this hymn is familiar, not to say clichéd, material in soma hymns, but as usual there are small deviations and striking images that challenge our notion that the soma hymns, particularly those in gāyatrī meter, are an undifferentiated mass of repetitive phrases.

1. Purify yourself in the sweetest, most exhilarating stream, Soma,
   when you are pressed for Indra to drink.
2. Demon-smasher, common to all domains, he has reached his seat upon
   the metal-hammered womb,
   upon his sitting place, by means of the wooden (vessel).
3. Become the best establisher of the wide realm, most munificent, best
   smasher of obstacles.
   Deliver (to us) the bounty of the liberal ones.

4. Rush to the pursuit of the great gods with your stalk,
   to the prize of victory and to fame.
5. Toward you do we proceed; this is just our goal every day.
   O drop, in you are our hopes.
6. The Daughter of the Sun purifies your circling soma
   with the fleece-filter in unfailing measure.
7. Him do the delicate ones grasp at the clash—the ten maidens [=fingers],
   the sisters—on the decisive day.
8. Him do the unwed girls impel, as they blow the skin bagpipe,
   him, the threefold wild honey.
9. And him do the inviolable milk-cows prepare, as their child,
   the soma, for Indra to drink.
10. In the raptures of just this (soma) Indra the champion keeps smashing
    all obstacles
   and bestows bounties.

IX.2 (714) Soma Pavamāna

Medhātithi Kāṇva
10 verses: gāyatrī

Medhātithi Kāṇva is the named poet of several hymns in the first half of Maṇḍala VIII (2–3, 32), with its predominantly Kāṇva authorship—but more to the point also of the second division of Maṇḍala I (I.12–23). So, just as the first hymn of IX is ascribed to the poet of the first hymns of Maṇḍala I, the second hymn of IX is said to have been composed by the poet of the second collection in I.

The hymn begins with the signature command "purify yourself" (*pávasva*), and the first word of the second pāda belongs to the same root: *pavítram*, the "means of purifying," that is, the filter. The first verses in general follow the steps in the preparation of soma after the pressing proper: the filtering of the pressed soma (vs. 1), into a vessel (vs. 2) with water (vss. 3–4), followed by the mixing with milk (vs. 4). This process is summarized in grandiose and cosmic terms in the following two verses (5–6), with the verbal accompaniment, the hymns and prayers, introduced in verses 7–8. Verse 9 echoes the earlier part of the hymn, particularly verse 3, and the poet ends (vs. 10) with a description of all of Soma's winnings, which can be interpreted as a covert request for Soma to provide us with these items.

There is nothing particularly noteworthy or out of the ordinary in this hymn, which could be taken as a prototypical Soma hymn.

1. Purify yourself across the filter at speed, Soma, pursuing the gods.
   As a bull, enter Indra, o drop.
2. Coil yourself toward great enjoyment, o drop, as the most
    heaven-bright bull.

Sit steadfast on your womb.

3. The stream of the pressed one, of the ritual adept, has milked out its own dear honey.
Very resolute, he has clothed himself in the waters.
4. The great waters, the rivers, rush after you, the great one,
when you will clothe yourself with the cows.
5. The sea has been groomed in the waters—the prop and buttress of heaven,
the soma in the filter, seeking us.
6. The tawny bull has bellowed; the great one, lovely to see like an ally,
shines along with the sun.
7. O drop, the industrious songs are constantly groomed by your power,
the songs by which you are (in turn) beautified for exhilaration.
8. We implore you, who make wide space, for ardent exhilaration.
To you belong great praise songs.
9. For us, o drop, while seeking Indra, purify yourself in a stream of honey,
like rain-bearing Parjanya.
10. O drop, you are cow-winning, man-winning, horse-winning, and prize-winning.
You are the ancient embodiment of the sacrifice.

IX.3 (715) Soma Pavamāna

Śunaḥśepa Ājīīgarti
10 verses: gāyatrī

Following the pattern set by IX.1–2, the Anukramaṇī gives as the poet of this hymn the author of the third collection of hymns in Maṇḍala I (24–30), Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti, also the protagonist of the famous Aitareya Brāhmaṇa story of father/son sacrifice (AiB VII.13–18), related during the Rājasūya, the Royal Consecration.

The hymn is verbally unified by the "this (one)" (*eṣá*), which begins every verse. It is thematically unified by its focus on only one step of the preparation, the filtering through sheep's wool that is the self-purification proper. A form of the verb "purify oneself" appears in seven of the ten verses (and "filter" derived from the same root in an eighth; only vss. 1 and 6 lack such a form). The poet provides variety with a range of images, from the bird of verse 1 to the chariot rider in verse 5, and as is common he conflates, and equates, the ritual and cosmic spheres. So, for example, the filter across which the soma moves is both a tangle of wool (vs. 2) and the vast spaces of heaven and the atmosphere (vs. 7).

1. This god, the immortal, flies like a bird on the wing
toward the wooden cups to take his seat.

2. This god, created by poetic inspiration, streaks across the tangles (of sheep's wool)
 purifying himself, impossible to deceive.
3. This god, the tawny one, purifying himself,
 is groomed for the prize by the admiring (poets) who pursue the truth.
4. This one, like a champion traveling with his warriors,
 strives to win all desirable things, while he purifies himself.
5. This god rides on a chariot; while he purifies himself, he shows his favor
 and makes manifest his noise.
6. This one, praised by the inspired poets, the god, plunges through the waters,
 establishing treasures for the pious man.
7. This one streaks through heaven, across the airy spaces in his stream,
 whinnying again and again as he purifies himself.
8. This one has now run through heaven, across the airy spaces, and cannot be recaptured—
 good at the rite as he purifies himself.
9. This one, pressed in the way of his ancient birth, the god pressed for gods,
 the tawny one, rushes into the filter.
10. And this one here, he of much authority, giving birth to refreshing drinks while he is being born,
 purifies himself in a stream when he is pressed.

IX.4 (716) Soma Pavamāna

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
10 verses: gāyatrī

Once again, the poet of this fourth hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala is also the author of the fourth collection of hymns in Maṇḍala I (I.31–35), as well as another Soma hymn, IX.69.

The thematic constriction of the soma hymns is even narrower than usual in this hymn. A third of each verse is occupied by the self-contained refrain (pāda c: *áthā no vásyasas kr̥dhi* "then make us better off"), and many of the verses consist of short imperative clauses. There are local repetitions as well: the initial "win!" (*sánā*) of verses 1–3, the repeated pāda about resolve and help in verses 5b–6a, and the initial "rush" (*abhy àrṣa*) of verses 7–8. Only two verses (6, 9) lack an imperative, and the former contains an optative in similar usage.

These conscious formal limits of the hymn are obviously its point: content is secondary. One might note, however, that the sun's light is especially desired (vss. 2, 5, 6).

1. Win, Soma, and conquer great fame, self-purifying one.
   – Then make us better off.
2. Win light, win the sun, and all the gifts of good fortune, Soma.
   – Then make us better off.
3. Win skill and resolve. Soma, strike away the scorners.
   – Then make us better off.
4. Purifiers, purify soma for Indra to drink.
   – Then make us better off.
5. Give us a share in the sun through your resolve and your help.
   – Then make us better off.
6. Through your resolve and your help might we see the sun for a long time.
   – Then make us better off.
7. Rush, well-armed Soma, toward double-lofty wealth.
   – Then make us better off.
8. Rush toward wealth, as the unbudgeable victor in battles.
   – Then make us better off.
9. They have increased you with sacrifices at your expansion, self-purifying one.
   – Then make us better off.
10. Bring us glittering wealth in horses, o drop, through our whole lifetime.
   – Then make us better off.

The pattern of matches between the order of poets in the Maṇḍala I and that of IX is broken by IX.5. The next twenty hymns (IX.5–24) are attributed to Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa, poets not otherwise found in the Anukramaṇī list of R̥gvedic poets, though there are other poets with the patronymic Kāśyapa, as well as Kaśyapa Mārīca, to whom a number of hymns, including several in IX, are attributed.

IX.5 (717) Āprī

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
11 verses: gāyatrī 1–7, anuṣṭubh 8–11

An interesting hybrid: the poet has taken the strict patterning of the Āprī hymns of the animal sacrifice, in which each verse contains a key word or phrase (italicized in translation) and the verses appear in the same order, and adapted it to the Soma Pavamāna genre. The same key words are found in the same order, but they are no longer directly addressed to or descriptive of a series of different divinities and divinized ritual elements. Instead Soma is sometimes identified with the divinity

of the original Āprī verse (vss. 2, 7), or characterized by the epithet used for that divinity (vss. 1, 3), or, most often, he manipulates the divinized element (vss. 4, 5, 10) or associates with the Āprī divinity at the sacrifice (vss. 6, 8, 9, 11). Each verse contains a form of *pávamāna* "self-purifying" to anchor the Āprī structure to the soma context.

1. *Enkindled*, the self-purifying lord shines forth in every direction,
   giving pleasure, the ever-roaring bull.
2. As *Tanūnapāt*, the self-purifying one, sharpening his horns, rushes
   through the midspace, ever-shining.
3. *Worthy to be invoked*, the self-purifying one, heaven-bright wealth, shines forth
   with his streams of honey, with his strength.
4. The tawny self-purifying one, strewing the *ritual grass* toward the east with his strength,
   speeds as a god to the gods.
5. With their frames the golden *Divine Doors* open up aloft,
   well praised by the self-purifying one.
6. The self-purifying one acts the bull to the two handsomely adorned females, lofty and great,
   Night and Dawn, like two (women) lovely to see.
7. Both gods who have the gaze of men, the two *Divine Hotars*, do I summon—
   the self-purifying one and Indra the bull.
8. *Bhāratī, Sarasvatī*, and *Iḍā* the great, the three goddesses of beautiful ornaments,
   will come here to this sacrifice of ours for the self-purifying one.
9. *Tvaṣṭar*, the first-born herdsman who journeys in advance, do I summon here.
   The drop is Indra, the tawny bull; the self-purifying one is Prajāpati.
10. O self-purifying one, with your honeyed stream anoint the *Lord of the Forest*,
    the tawny one with a thousand branches, blazing, golden.
11. All you gods, come here to the *svāhā-cry* of the self-purifying one:
    Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, the Sun, Agni, and Indra, all of one accord.

IX.6 (718) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Soma's journey—to the gods, to Indra, and to us, as well as to the state of exhilaration and to material rewards—is the primary subject of this hymn. In the last

two verses (8–9) Soma's association with poetry and with the exercise of poetic skill is mentioned. The last statement, that Soma takes to himself hymns, though they are hidden, is not entirely clear, but it may refer to his ability to stimulate poetic inspiration, and to cause poets to create new hymns from deep within themselves.

Noteworthy is also the pun in verse 2, where the drop (*índu*) is urged to flow as "Indra." The phonological similarity between these two words is often exploited elsewhere, indeed in the immediately preceding hymn (IX.5.9).

1. O Soma, as bull purify yourself in a gladdening stream as you seek
   the gods,
   as you seek us, in the sheep's fleece.
2. Toward this exhilarating exhilaration, o drop, flow as "Indra"—
   and toward prizewinning chargers.
3. Toward this ancient exhilaration rush into the filter as you are being
   pressed,
   and toward victory's prize and fame.
4. In succession, the droplets, the drops, have run like waters down
   a slope.
   Being purified, they have reached Indra.
5. Whom the ten maidens groom like a prizewinning steed,
   him playing in the wood(en vessel), beyond the sheep [=fleece],
6. That bullish sap—merge it with the cows, for exhilaration, for the gods'
   pursuit—
   the pressed soma for the taking.
7. The god for the god—pressed, he purifies himself in a stream
   for Indra,
   when he [=Indra] swells his milk.
8. The embodiment of the sacrifice, the pressed soma, having been pressed,
   purifies himself at speed.
   He protects the age-old poetic skill.
9. In just this way, as you are being purified and seeking Indra, for him to
   pursue exhilaration, you most exhilarating one,
   you make the hymns, though hidden, your own.

IX.7 (719) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

The word "soma" does not appear at all in this hymn, and the epithet "self-purifying" (*pávamāna*) only once, in verse 5 (a finite verb form from the same root is found in vs. 8). Verses 1 and 8 have a similar structure, especially in their final pādas, and

form a ring, with the last verse (9) addressed not to soma but to the world-halves and seemingly extra-hymnic. The two middle verses (4–5) contain the meat of the hymn: Soma is depicted both as a poet (as in the previous hymn, IX.6.8–9) and a successful king and warrior. The rest of the hymn (vss. 1–3, 6–8) depicts the usual journey of the soma around the fleece filter and into the wooden vessel in which he mixes with water. The final two verses of the hymn proper (7–8) name several of the divine recipients of soma; those in verse 7 are especially associated with the Morning Pressing.

1. The drops have surged along the path of truth, upon its foundation—the very splendid ones,
   recognizing its route.
2. Forth (goes) the stream, the forefront of the honey; it plunges through the great waters,
   to be extolled as the oblation among oblations.
3. Forth (he goes) as the forefront of speech, his yokemate; the bull has roared down into the wood(en vessel),
   toward his seat: he is the real rite.
4. When the poet, clothing himself in his poetic skills and manly powers, rushes around (the fleece),
   the racehorse strives to win the sun.
5. The self-purifying one sits over his opponents, like a king over the clans,
   when the ritual adepts set him in motion.
6. (Having circled) around the sheep's fleece, the dear tawny one sits in the wood(en vessels);
   husky-voiced, he is eager to prevail with his thought.
7. He goes with his exhilaration to Vāyu, Indra, and the Aśvins,
   with the joy that is in accord with his ordinances.
8. The waves of honey attract here through their purification Mitra and Varuṇa, and Bhaga,
   recognizing them through its powers.
9. You two World-Halves, for us to win the prize of honey, conquer wealth,
   conquer fame and goods.

IX.8 (719) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although this hymn is, of course, dedicated to self-purifying Soma, the process is repeatedly described in the passive ("being purified," vss. 2, 3, 6) rather than in the usual reflexive construction. However, this grammatical peculiarity does not seem to deprive Soma of agency: he (or his juices) are urged to increase Indra's power

(vs. 1), provide us with power (vss. 2, 8), cause Indra to be generous to us (vs. 3) and provide us with mortal patrons as well (vs. 7), remove hostilities (vs. 7), and cause the rain to fall (vs. 8), among other things.

The middle verses (4–6) concern the preparation of soma; as usual, the materials used in the preparation are animatized (vss. 5–6): the "ewes" are the fleece filter, the "cows" and "cattle" the milk-mixture.

The first three verses reunite the group of gods to whom Soma went in the previous hymn (IX.7.7): Vāyu and the Aśvins (vs. 2) and Indra (vss. 1, 3), the principal deities of the Morning Pressing.

1. These soma juices have flowed toward Indra's own desire,
   increasing his heroic power.
2. Being purified, finding a seat in the cups, going to Vāyu and the
   Aśvins,
   let them confer good heroic power on us.
3. O Soma, rouse the heart of Indra to generosity, as you are being purified
   to take your seat on the womb of truth.
4. Ten fingers groom you; seven insightful thoughts propel you.
   Inspired poets have cheered you on.
5. For the gods, for their exhilaration, you who are surging through
   the ewes
   do we clothe with cows.
6. Being purified in the tubs, he, tawny and ruddy,
   has wrapped himself in garments of cattle.
7. Attract bounteous patrons for us through your purification. Strike away
   all hatreds.
   O drop, enter your comrade.
8. Stream rain from heaven and heavenly brilliance from the earth.
   Confer strength in battles on us, Soma.
9. Might we have a share in you, drawing the gaze of men, drunk by Indra,
   finding the sun—
   and a share in offspring and refreshment.

IX.9 (721) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Unlike the relatively straightforward preceding hymns, this one is full of puzzles and ambiguities, with the implements and process of soma purification compared to cosmic entities and actions. Some of the puzzles are illuminated by the next hymn, IX.10, which is in some ways a more straightforward twin to this one. This one also appears to be an omphalos hymn, with an inner ring

defined by numerological repetition in verses 4 and 6, around the omphalos verse 5.

On the ritual level, the soma is pressed between or in his two granddaughters (vs. 1): most likely the hands of the priest, on the basis of IX.10.2; after his journey (vss. 1–2), accompanied by hymns he is united with the waters (vss. 4–5), who make him their eye. He is called upon to give aid to the ritual and to the hymn (vss. 7–8).

This synopsis leaves a number of questions unanswered. Who, for example, are his two mothers in verse 3? Are they the same as his two female kinsmen in verse 1? Since Ṛgvedic poets delight in paradoxical kinship relationships, this is certainly possible. If so, they could be both the ritual implement (hands) and Heaven and Earth, and in this latter cosmic manifestation their son Soma, who makes them shine in verse 3, could be identified with the sun—an identification that is supported by the "single eye" of verse 4. Again under a cosmic interpretation the rivers of verse 4 can be not only the waters with which soma mixes in his ritual preparation, but also the heavenly streams (and indeed real rivers).

The referents in the middle verses 4–6 are especially floating and uncertain: both the insights and the rivers of verse 4 are feminine in gender. The agent of verse 5 (the omphalos verse) is feminine plural, and so could be either insights or rivers or both, and "the great" is also left unspecified. In verse 6 we encounter "the seven" again, which can either be the seven insights of verse 4 (which we also met in the preceding hymn, IX.8.4) or the rivers, since the canonical number of rivers is seven. This series of puzzles is capped by the final pāda of verse 6, with the impossible word *krívi*, which seems here to refer to Soma. The goddesses whom he satisfies could, again, be either the rivers or the insights (or perhaps even just goddesses).

The final three verses (7–9), with their requests, cause little difficulty, by contrast.

Although the mysteries of the hymn remain largely unsolved, we can note a thematic strain that provides some unity: the issue of light and darkness. The Soma/Sun of verse 3 lights up his mothers; he may also be the Sun in verse 4. In verse 7 we call upon Soma to help us combat darkness and in verse 8 to light up the lights. The last word of the hymn (vs. 9) is "sun" (*svàḥ*). It seems that in this hymn Soma is both identified with the Sun and seen as a force that can win and keep the light that Vedic people so craved and worried about. This focus on the sun is also found in the next hymn, IX.10.

1. The poet of heaven makes the circuit of his own vital powers, when
   propelled between his two granddaughters
   as he is being pressed—he who has a poet's purpose.
2. You, delightful to the praiseworthy dwelling place, to the race without
   deceit [=gods]—
   rush ever forward in your most pleasing pursuit (of them).
3. He, their blazing son, made his two mothers shine—he just born and
   they just born,
   he the great and they the great, increasing through truth.

4. Propelled by seven insightful thoughts, he quickened the rivers without deceit,
   they who strengthened him as the single eye.
5. They installed the youth as dominating and indestructible for the great;
   they installed the drop, Indra, under your commandment.
6. The immortal draft-horse looks upon the seven as he draws.
   Krivi has satisfied the goddesses.
7. Help us in our ritual arrangements, o male. The shades of darkness must be fought, Soma.
   You shall keep smiting them, o you who are being purified.
8. Now make the paths for our newer and newer hymn reach their goal.
   Make the lights light up as of old.
9. Self-purifying one, bestow great fame, the cow, and the horse along with heroes.
   Win wisdom, win the sun.

IX.10 (722) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn, which shares a number of themes with IX.9, begins with three verses heavy with similes, quickly sketching the pressing, filtering, and mixing of the soma juices. After a verse (4) with no poetic figuration, the second part of the hymn switches to metaphor, and especially to metaphors of and identifications with the sun, as in IX.9. The spreading of the soma juices across the sheep's fleece is likened to suns and their rays (vs. 5). The "lone one" in verse 7 is probably both the soma crossing the filter and the sun crossing heaven. Soma's eye is first tied to the sun (vs. 8), and then the sun implicitly becomes his eye (vs. 9). In addition, the "portion" of Vivasvant ("the one shining forth") and of Dawn in verse 5 probably refers to the radiance of these divinities, obtained by the soma juices, which are then transformed into suns.

Other metaphors involve the poets and sacrificers: the doors of poetry (vs. 6), the seven siblings of the priests (vs. 7), who are no doubt the seven inspired thoughts of previous hymns (IX.9.4, 6; IX.8.4). This latter metaphor of kinship then provides our own kinship relationship to Soma himself (vs. 8). One image remains somewhat obscure: in verse 9 the "track of heaven" is said to have been placed in hiding by the Adhvaryus. This must be a specific ritual reference, with the track of heaven being likened to Soma's own tracks—perhaps when Soma disappears into the fleece when the Adhvaryu priests are first pressing him.

1. While being pressed, the soma juices, resounding like chariots, seeking fame like chargers,
   have marched forth for wealth.
2. Being propelled like chariots, they have run between the two hands (of the priest).
   Their takings are like those of decisive victors.
3. Like kings by encomia, the soma juices are anointed with cows,
   like the sacrifice by its seven ordainers.
4. While resounding [/being pressed] for exhilaration with might and song, the drops,
   pressed, rush around in a stream.
5. Having obtained (the portion) of Vivasvant, begetting the portion of Dawn,
   the suns stretch out across the fine (fleece).
6. The ancient bards thrust open the doors of poetic thoughts—
   the Āyus for the raging of the bull.
7. They sit all together, the Hotars with their seven siblings,
   guiding the track of the lone one safely across.
8. He has bound his navel to our navel, as also his eye to the sun.
   He has yielded progeny to the poet as milk.
9. Over his own dear (tracks) and the track of heaven, which was placed in hiding by the Adhvaryus,
   he looks with the eye of the sun.

IX.11 (723) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Much of this hymn consists of exhortations to the priests to perform their parts of the soma preparation, interspersed with addresses to Soma to purify himself for our benefit. Unlike the last few hymns attributed to the same poet, the language and syntax present no difficulties, and there is almost no imagery or verbal figuration. It is a no-nonsense production.

1. Sing to him, men, to the self-purifying drop,
   as he seeks to attain the gods.
2. The Atharvan-priests have now mixed your milk with honey—
   mixed the god for the god in seeking the gods.
3. Purify yourself as weal for our cow, weal for our people, weal for our charger,
   weal for our plants, o king.

4. Now, to the self-powerful brown one, to the ruddy one who touches heaven,
   to Soma, chant a song.
5. Purify the soma pressed with stones set in motion by the hands.
   Rinse the honey in honey.
6. Just with homage approach it. Just with curds mix it.
   Place the drop in Indra.
7. As the limitless smiter of foes, o Soma, purify yourself as weal for our cow,
   acting for the gods according to their desire.
8. You are poured around, Soma, for Indra to drink, for his exhilaration—
   perceiving thoughts as master of thought.
9. Self-purifying Soma, give us wealth and an abundance of heroes,
   o drop, along with Indra as our yokemate.

IX.12 (724) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although entirely focused on the process of soma preparation, this hymn displays the common rhetorical inflation of this process by associating it with cosmic elements. Thus, for example, in verse 4 Soma is both "in the navel of heaven" and "in the sheep's fleece"—both referring to the filter; the "surface of the sea" in verse 6 is either the soma itself collected in the vessel or the water with which it mixes; the "dear tracks of heaven" in verse 8 are the meanderings of soma through the fleece filter (see also IX.10.9). The buffalo-cow in verse 3 is probably the hide on which the pressing apparatus is set. Only in the last verse (9) does the poet make any requests of the god.

1. The soma juices have surged, the drops pressed in the seat of truth,
   most honeyed for Indra.
2. The inspired poets have roared—like mother cows to their calf—
   to Indra, to drink the soma.
3. Arousing exhilaration, attentive to poetic inspiration, he dwells in his seat, in the wave of the river:
   Soma is set upon the buffalo-cow.
4. In the navel of heaven, he, wide-gazing, shows his greatness in the sheep's fleece:
   Soma, who is a poet with good purpose.
5. The soma that is in the tubs, that is placed within the filter,
   that does the drop embrace.

6. The drop sends forth his speech upon the surface of the sea,
   quickening the cask dripping with honey.
7. The lord of the forest who has praise as his own, yielding the juice of insights within (the filter),
   propelling the human generations,
8. Being himself propelled, Soma rushes toward the dear tracks of heaven,
   the sage poet, with the stream of an inspired poet.
9. Self-purifying one, secure wealth of a thousand lusters
   close at hand to us, o drop.

IX.13 (725) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
9 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse, with its mention of Vāyu and Indra, identifies this as the first soma-offering of the day. Otherwise the hymn is a confection of clichés familiar from many other soma hymns.

1. As he is being purified, Soma rushes in a thousand streams beyond the sheep [=fleece]
   to his encounter with Vāyu and Indra.
2. You who are seeking help, sing forth to the self-purifying inspired poet,
   who has been pressed to pursue the gods.
3. The thousand-faceted soma juices purify themselves to win the prize,
   being hymned to pursue the gods.
4. And for us to win the prize, by purifying yourself (bring) lofty refreshments
   and a heaven-bright abundance of heroes, o drop.
5. By purifying themselves, let them bring thousandfold wealth and an abundance of heroes for us—
   the divine drops being pressed.
6. Like racehorses being driven on by their drivers, they have surged to win the prize—
   swift across the sheep's fleece.
7. Bellowing like cows to their calf, the drops rush.
   They have run between the hands (of the priest).
8. Pleasing to Indra, exhilarating, constantly roaring—o self-purifying one,
   strike away all hatreds.
9. Striking away the non-givers, purifying yourselves, looking like the sun,
   sit on the womb of truth.

IX.14 (726) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

The poet of this hymn seems to be practicing his figurative language, presenting us in nonsequential verses with several different versions of the same step in the preparation of soma. This is especially clear in his depiction of the manual manipulation of soma: in verse 2 the hands are called "troops of five kinsmen," in verse 5 the same fingers are "the granddaughters of Vivasvant" (here the prototype sacrificer), and in verse 7 a standard word for "fingers" finally makes its appearance. Similarly he gives two quite similar expressions for the mixing with milk, both using the image of clothing (vss. 3, 5), and in verse 6 there is a glancing reference to Soma's desire for cows.

The episodic structure of the hymn also seems reflected in the shifting tenses of the verbs. In particular, the past tense of verse 3ab seems to follow directly from verse 1, with the presents of verses 2 and 3c in alternation.

1. The poet flowed around and forth, set upon the swell of the river,
   bringing the decisive action for which many are eager.
2. When the troops of five kinsmen [=hands], eager to work,
   prepare the steadfast one with a hymn—
3. After that, all the gods found exhilaration in the juice of him, the
   tempestuous one—
   when he clothes himself with cows.
4. Spilling over, he runs out, leaving behind the stems that belong to
   his body.
   In this place here he slams together with his yokemate [=Indra].
5. He who, like a handsome youth, has been groomed by the
   granddaughters of Vivasvant [=fingers],
   making the cows like a garment,
6. With a yen for cows, he goes crossways along the fine prop [=fleece].
   He raises the call that he knows as his own.
7. The fingers have come together to him, grooming the lord of
   refreshment.
   They have grasped the back of the prizewinning horse.
8. Ever embracing all good things, heavenly and earthly, o Soma,
   seeking us, make your journey.

IX.15 (727) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

A simple device provides formal unity to this hymn: the form "this one" that begins every verse. In the first six verses it is the nominative subject (*eṣá*), in the last two (vss. 7–8) the accusative object (*etám*), so that there is some progression and development, even while the referent remains constant.

Except for verse 2, the focus is entirely on Soma's journey across the fleece and into the cup, where both the waters (vs. 5) and the milk (vs. 6) await him. (The mention of grasses in vs. 6 is unclear.)

1. This one drives with insight along the fine (fleece), a champion with his swift chariots,
   going to his encounter with Indra.
2. This one exercises his insight on many things for the divine assemblage on high,
   where the immortals have their seats.
3. This one, propelled, is led through and within (the filter) along the path of beauty,
   when the fervent thrust him on.
4. This one, the bull of the herd, sharpens his horns, ever shaking them,
   deploying his manly powers with his might.
5. This one, a prizewinning horse, speeds with his beautiful bright shoots,
   becoming the lord of the rivers.
6. This one, having journeyed along the "articulation" (of the fleece) toward the "plodding goods" [=cows],
   goes down into the grasses.
7. This one worthy of grooming do the Āyus groom in the wooden cups,
   when he has produced great refreshments.
8. This one here the ten fingers and the seven insights groom,
   the most exhilarating one possessing good weapons.

IX.16 (728) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

This little hymn presents several difficulties of interpretation, even though like many hymns in this series it does not deviate from the ritual scene, especially the filtering of the pressed juice, and it is built around a limited verbal lexicon, especially the phonological near mirror images √*sr̥j* "surge" and √*r̥ṣ* "rush." In verse 1 Soma is implicitly identified with Etaśa, the sun's horse, and in verse 7 he swells "like the back of heaven." But otherwise cosmic references and comparisons are absent, and

the soma again and again runs across the filter (vss. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) and joins with the waters (vss. 2–3) and the milk (vss. 2 and 6), to furnish Indra's drink (vss. 3, 5).

The most problematic form is the hapax *ánapta* in verse 3, about which there is no scholarly agreement. We have very tentatively connected it with *naptī́* "granddaughter," a very rare word that nonetheless appears twice in this poet's collection (IX.9.1, 14.5), used of the preparers of soma or their equipment.

1. The pressers pro(pel) your sap in their arms, for ardent exhilaration.
   Etaśa charges like a surge (of waters).
2. With resolve we accompany the charioteer of skill, who clothes himself
   in waters along with his stalk,
   the winner of cows, among the fine (tufts of fleece).
3. Send the soma surging into the filter, the one difficult to overtake in the
   waters (even) without the granddaughters(' preparation) [?].
   Purify him for Indra to drink.
4. With attention Soma rushes forth into the filter of the one being purified;
   with resolve he has taken his seat.
5. Forth to you, Indra, the drops, the soma juices, have surged with
   homage—
   for the great taking of the decisive victor.
6. Being purified within the sheep's shape, rushing toward all that is glorious,
   like a champion he stands among the cattle.
7. Having swelled like the back of heaven, the stream of the pressed
   ritual adept
   rushes at will into the filter.
8. You, Soma, (sending forth speech) attentive to poetic inspiration, being
   purified in your full measure among the Āyus,
   run through the sheep's fleece.

IX.17 (729) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
8 verses: gāyatrī

A straightforward hymn: the soma juices flow quickly on their journey through the filter into the vessels and thence to Indra and the gods, a journey compared to that of the sun. The role of speech in the soma sacrifice is also emphasized, with soma both inspiring speech and being strengthened by it.

1. Like rivers along a downward slope, smashing obstacles, turbulent,
   the swift soma juices have been sent surging.
2. As they are pressed, the drops, the soma juices, like rains to the earth,
   have flowed to Indra.

3. The exhilarating drink of exhilaration, the soma, rushes into the filter beyond the waves,
   smashing aside the demons, seeking the gods.
4. He runs into the tubs; he is poured around into the filter.
   He grows strong through the hymns at the sacrifices.
5. You blaze beyond the three luminous realms like the (sun) ascending to heaven, o Soma.
   Sending forth (speech), you have spurred it on, like the sun.
6. The inspired poets, the bards, have roared to him at the head of the sacrifice,
   keeping the dear one in their sight.
7. The men, the inspired poets, seeking help, groom you, the prizewinning horse,
   with their insights, for the divine conclave.
8. Flow following the stream of honey. You, the sharp (soma), have taken your seat,
   pleasing to be drunk for truth.

IX.18 (730) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

The most salient feature of this hymn is its pāda-length refrain, promising health and wholeness. The beginning (vs. 1) and end (vs. 7) of the hymn record the ritual moment, the purification in the filter. The intermediate verses, especially 4–6, ascribe human and then cosmic powers to the ritual substance. Verses 4–6 are also syntactically unresolved, as they consist of three parallel relative clauses in the ab pādas, couched in the 3rd person, interrupted by the refrain addressing Soma in the 2nd person in the c pāda. The 3rd-person main clause that brings closure to this structure is found in the final verse, 7ab.

It is noteworthy that the word "soma" is found only in the first verse.

1. Mountain-dwelling Soma, being pressed, has flowed around in the filter.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
2. You are the inspired one, you the sage poet, the honey that is born from the stalk.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
3. All the gods, joined in fellowship, have attained the drinking of you.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
4. He who holds all desirable good things in his two hands—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.

5. Who will yield milk like these two great world-halves, the two mothers together—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
6. Who on the same day rushes around both worlds with the prizes of victory—
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.
7. He, tempestuous in the tubs, kept roaring while being purified.
   – You are the one who confers wholeness in the raptures of exhilaration.

IX.19 (731) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn contains fewer direct ritual references than recent hymns. The focus is instead on the exchange relation between Soma and his praisers: hymns for goods, an exchange that is seen as, literally, fecund. Our insights and the words they produce are depicted as females waiting to be impregnated (vs. 5) and made to swell (vs. 2), as they call to the bullish Soma for his semen (vs. 4). The impregnated thoughts will give birth not only to inspired poetry, but also to the material goods that this poetry will win, as verses 1 and 6 make clear. The final two verses (6–7) also call for Soma's help in besting rivals.

1. O Soma, what bright good thing, heavenly or earthly, is worthy of hymns,
   bring that here to us as you are being purified.
2. For you two, o Soma, you and Indra, are lords of the sun, lords of cattle.
   Showing your mastery, make our insights swell.
3. The bull, being purified among the Āyus, thundering upon the ritual grass,
   although being a fallow bay horse, has sat down on his womb.
4. Our insightful words have bellowed over the seed of the bull,
   the mothers (over that) of the calf, their son.
5. Will he indeed set an embryo for those females yearning for a bull, as he is being purified—
   for those who give the gleaming milk?
6. Seek to win over those who stand aside, but set fear among our rivals.
   Self-purifying one, find wealth.
7. Soma, undermine the bull-like power of our rival, his tempestuousness, his vigor,
   whether he be in the distance or nearby.

IX.20 (731) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

Like the immediately preceding hymn, this one is less concerned with the details of the ritual (though they are not absent: the fleece filter, vss. 1, 7; the water and the cups, vs. 6) than with the ritual economy, where, for example, our thought helps purify Soma (vs. 3) and he in return finds wealth for the poets, singers, and patrons. Although most of the phraseology is standard for soma hymns, the image in verse 5 of Soma entering the songs seems to be a deliberate reversal of passages in which the songs themselves enter a god, and seems also to imitate and vary the numerous passages in which Soma enters Indra.

1. Forth the poet rushes, through the sheep's fleece, to pursue the gods,
   having prevailed over all opponents.
2. For he sends to the singers a prize of cattle
   in thousands, as he purifies himself.
3. With your attention you embrace all things; you purify yourself with our poetic thought.
   Soma, you will find fame for us.
4. Rush toward lofty glory, toward enduring wealth for our generous patrons.
   Bring refreshment here to the praisers.
5. You well keep commandments like a king. You have entered the songs, o Soma,
   while being purified, o unerring draft-horse.
6. That draft-horse, difficult to overtake in the waters, being groomed in (the priest's) hands,
   Soma, sits in the cups.
7. Playful, ready to give like a generous patron, you go through the filter, o Soma,
   establishing an abundance of heroes for the praiser.

IX.21 (733) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāsyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

For most of its length this hymn is a conventional depiction of the flowing of the soma drops and of the benefits that attend it. Verses 5 and 6, however, which are constructed in parallel, introduce twists of imagery. Addressed to the soma drops, the verses urge them to instruct the ungenerous man—presumably a patron who

does not distribute the appropriate priestly gifts at the soma sacrifice. In verse 6 the drops are commanded to set their own will to this task, as a craftsman sets a new chariot part, probably a wheel. In verse 5 they are meant to set "the tawny tracker" in an unspecified being or thing ("in this one"); although the referents for both have been variously identified, we believe that the tawny tracker is Soma himself, and Indra, already mentioned in verse 1, is the desired location.

1. These are running for Indra, these drops, the ardent soma juices,
   bringing exhilaration and finding the sun,
2. Warding off attackers, finding wide space for the presser,
   by themselves creating vitality for the praiser.
3. Moving playfully at will toward one and the same seat,
   the drops have flowed in various ways into the swell of the river.
4. These self-purifying ones have obtained all things of value,
   when propelled like the team on a chariot.
5. O drops, set the tawny tracker [=Soma himself] here in him [=Indra], to instruct (the man)
   who does not give to us.
6. Like a craftsman [/Ṛbhu] a new chariot (wheel), set your will to instruct (him).
   Purify yourselves to gleaming with your flood.
7. These (drops) here have bellowed; the prizewinning horses have made the finish line.
   They have stimulated the thought of (the poet) who is really present.

IX.22 (734) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with the conventional image of the soma juices racing forward (vs. 1), but their journey soon becomes both cosmic and mystical. Their rush is compared to cosmic forces in verse 2, and in verses 4–5 they travel through the cosmos itself. But the poet reaches even further conceptually: he equates this cosmic journey with a ritual one. In matched expressions in verses 3 and 5 the juices pervade not only the cosmic spaces (vs. 5) but also our "insights" (vs. 3), that is, the thoughts that produce ritual poetry. And in verse 6 they reach a higher place than the cosmic space, namely the sacrifice itself, symbolized, as often, by the stretched thread.

In the final verse (7) this journey theme is abruptly abandoned, and the disjunction between this verse and what precedes is also conveyed by the switch from plural ("soma juices") to singular ("Soma"), and from 3rd-person reference to 2nd. It also contains an implicit equation of Soma with (the unmentioned) Saramā, Indra's dog

who reacquired for him the cows stolen by the Paṇis (see esp. X.108)—an equation seemingly unmotivated by what precedes. (The Paṇis are mentioned only one other time in the IXth Maṇḍala [IX.11.2].) Perhaps the cosmic journey of Soma reminded the poet of Saramā's long trek. The stretched thread of the sacrifice ends the hymn, and brings it back to the ritual scene.

1. These swift soma juices have been propelled forward like prizewinning chariots,
   surges (of them) sent surging—
2. These, (surging) wide like the winds, like the rains of Parjanya,
   (surging) at will like the flickerings of fire.
3. These purified soma juices, mixed with curds, attentive to poetic inspiration,
   have pervaded our insights with inspiration.
4. These immortal ones, once groomed, have not flagged in their flowing,
   as they seek to reach the paths through the airy space.
5. These, going forth widely, have pervaded the backs of the two world-halves,
   and this highest airy space.
6. They have reached the highest thread being stretched, along the inclines,
   and this one that is to be higher still.
7. You, Soma, secured from the Paṇis the good things of cattle.
   You have roared toward the stretched thread.

IX.23 (735) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn begins very like the last one, with the rushing of the soma juices, but goes in a different direction. Verse 2 introduces the Āyus, men both of the past (so vs. 2, also IX.10.6) and of the present, who are regularly credited with the preparation of the soma in the IXth Maṇḍala and by this very poet (IX.10.6, 15.7, 16.8, 19.3). But surprisingly in verse 4 the Āyus are *identified* with the soma juices, a rhetorical strategy that must result from the fact that in this verse the juices purify themselves *into* the exhilarating drink; in other words they prepare themselves and therefore behave like the Āyus who prepare the soma.

In the last three verses (5–7) Soma's relationship to Indra becomes the focus: in verse 5 the rushing soma acquires the power of Indra as its essence, and in verses 6 and 7 this power is transferred to Indra, to perform his heroic deeds, both in the past and in the present. Verse 7 thus harkens back to the ancient Āyus and their newer path in verse 2.

1. The swift soma juices have surged forth in a stream of honey, of exhilaration,
   toward all our poems.
2. The ancient Āyus have marched along a newer track.
   They have begotten the sun, for it to shine.
3. Bring here to us, self-purifying one, the patrimony of the impious stranger.
   Produce refreshments along with progeny.
4. The soma juices, the Āyus, purify themselves into the exhilarating drink of exhilaration,
   (going) toward the cask dripping with honey.
5. The soma rushes steadily, acquiring Indrian strength as its essence,
   affording good heroes, protecting against imprecations.
6. You purify yourself for Indra, o Soma, and for the gods as their shared exhilaration.
   O drop, you strive to win the prize.
7. Having drunk of it, of its exhilarating drinks, Indra smashed the unopposable obstacles,
   and he shall smash them now.

IX.24 (736) Soma Pavamāna

Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
7 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is the last attributed to Asita or Devala Kāśyapa, and yet again the hymn begins with the running forth of the soma juices. It is an unremarkable hymn, but covers the major topics, though not in strict chronological order: the grooming in water (vs. 1), the mixture with milk (vs. 2), the filtering (vss. 3, 5). That soma is Indra's drink is repeatedly emphasized (vss. 2, 3, 5, and under the qualifier "conqueror of territories," a word regularly applied to Indra, vs. 4). Soma himself is given the most characteristic of Indra's epithets—"obstacle-smasher"—in the superlative in verse 6.

1. The soma juices have run forth, the self-purifying drops.
   Brought to readiness, they have been groomed in the waters.
2. The cows have run toward them, like waters going along a slope.
   Becoming purified, they have reached Indra.
3. You run forth, self-purifying Soma, for Indra to drink.
   Held by men, you are led through (the filter).
4. Bringing exhilaration to superior men, o Soma, purify yourself for the one who conquers the territories,
   you who are the winner to be celebrated.

5. O drop, when pressed by the stones you run around the filter,
   fit for the fundament of Indra.
6. Purify yourself, best smasher of obstacles, to be celebrated with hymns,
   gleaming, pure, unerring.
7. Gleaming and pure he is called "Soma," he of the pressed honey,
   pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.

IX.25 (737) Soma Pavamāna

Dṛḍhacyuta Āgastya
6 verses: gāyatrī

This is the only hymn in the Ṛgveda attributed to this poet, though his patronymic connects him to Agastya, the poet of a number of hymns in the late Ist Maṇḍala (I.165–91)—including the dialogue hymn I.165, in which Agastya mediates between Indra and the Maruts, who demand a share of the soma sacrifice. This connection may account for the mention of the Maruts in verse 1 as recipients of soma, along with Vāyu: the Maruts are quite scarce in the Soma Maṇḍala.

The hymn is otherwise unremarkable, though one might note the insistent identification of Soma as a *kaví* ("poet," vss. 3, 5, 6).

1. Purify yourself, as the one who brings skill to realization, for the gods to drink, o tawny one,
   the exhilarating drink for the Maruts and for Vāyu.
2. Self-purifying one, sped by insight, ever roaring toward your womb,
   enter Vāyu according to the (ritual) statute.
3. The bull becomes beautiful together with the gods, the dear poet in his womb,
   the smasher of obstacles, best pursuer of the gods.
4. Entering into all forms, becoming purified, the delightful one journeys
   to where the immortals have their seats.
5. Ruddy Soma, giving birth to songs, purifies himself, attended by the Āyus,
   going to Indra with a poet's purpose.
6. Purify yourself in a stream in the filter, you most exhilarating poet,
   to sit in the womb of chant.

IX.26 (738) Soma Pavamāna

Idhmavāha Dārḍhacyuta
6 verses: gāyatrī

Attributed to a descendant of the poet of the previous hymn, based on his patronymic, this hymn contains nothing novel in terms of content, but it is tightly structured. All

verses but the last begin with "that one, him" (*tám*) referring to the Soma, while the last begins with a 2nd-person variant on this, "you" (*tám tvā*), literally "that you." The last four verses (3–6) all contain a 3rd plural "they impell(ed)" (*ahyan, hinvanti* built to the same root √*hi*), and the compounds of 3c and 5c "…to/of many" (*bhū́ri*) phonologically echo the word for "arms" (*bhuríjor*) in the middle verse (4a).

1. Him have the inspired poets groomed—the prizewinner in the lap of Aditi,
   through the fine (fleece) and with insight.
2. Him have the cows lowed toward, the imperishable one of a thousand streams,
   the drop, supporter of heaven.
3. Him, the ritual adept, have they impelled through their wisdom—the one purifying himself in heaven,
   steadfast, giving nurture to many.
4. Him have they impelled between the two arms with the insight of Vivasvant, him who is also clad in it,
   the undeceivable lord of speech.
5. Him do the siblings [=fingers] impel with the stones on the back (of the filter)—the tawny one,
   delightful, drawing the gaze of many.
6. You, self-purifying one, grown strong through song [/on the mountain], do the ritual adepts impel
   as exhilaration for Indra, o drop.

IX.27 (739) Soma Pavamāna

Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Though attributed to a different poet and a different poetic lineage, this hymn, like the last one (IX.26), is unified by a repeated initial pronoun in every verse, in this case "this one, he" (*eṣá*) referring to Soma. Again, the content is conventional, though there is emphasis on Soma's victories and acquisitions (vss. 1, 2, 3, 4) and his successful competition with the sun (vss. 2, 5). The cosmic aspect of Soma is thus raised but not insisted upon.

1. This one, the much-praised poet, spills over into the filter,
   striking away failures, while being purified.
2. This one, winning the sun, is poured all around for Indra and Vāyu
   in the filter, the one who brings skill to realization.
3. This one is led through (the filter) by men—the head of heaven, the bull, the pressed
   soma in the wooden (vessels), acquiring [/knowing] all.

4. This one, purifying himself, has roared, seeking cows, seeking gold—
   the drop, winning completely, not to be laid low.
5. This one races with the sun while purifying himself in heaven—
   in the filter he is the exhilarating drink of exhilaration.
6. This one, the tempestuous tawny bull, has flowed in the midspace,
   toward Indra—the drop as it is becoming purified.

IX.28 (740) Soma Pavamāna

Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Attributed to another Āṅgirasa, whose given name is similar to the poet of the last hymn (IX.27), this follows the same pattern, with initial "he, that one" (*eṣá*) opening every verse. Otherwise it is constructed of the usual clichés, though the rhetoric is nicely balanced.

1. This one, the prizewinner propelled by men, all-knowing as the lord
      of mind,
   runs through the sheep's fleece.
2. This one has flowed into the filter, the soma pressed for the gods,
   entering all their domains.
3. This one, an immortal god, beautifies himself in his womb,
   the smasher of obstacles, best pursuer of the gods.
4. This one, the ever-roaring bull, held by the ten siblings [=fingers],
   runs to the wooden cups.
5. This one, self-purifying, boundless, made the sun shine,
   as the all-knowing one (knowing) all the domains.
6. This one, tempestuous, undeceivable Soma, rushes while being purified,
   pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.

IX.29 (741) Soma Pavamāna

Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Another short and conventional hymn, with a focus on winning goods and conquering enemies (esp. vss. 3–5). It is attributed to the same poet as IX.27.

1. His streams have flowed forth, those of the pressed bull, who with his
      strength
   attends upon the gods in sequence.

2. The ritual adepts groom the team—the bards singing with their song
   the one born as the light worthy of hymns.
3. These things are easy to conquer for you as you become purified, o Soma
   providing outstanding goods.
   Increase the sea that is worthy of hymns.
4. Winning all good things, purify yourself in a stream, Soma.
   Drive hostilities to a single end.
5. Protect us well from the non-giver, from the mere sound of any such a one,
   when we have become free of insult.
6. O drop, in purifying yourself in a stream attract earthly and heavenly
   wealth.
   Bring here your brilliant tempestuous force.

IX.30 (742) Soma Pavamāna

Bindu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse of this hymn is very like the opening verse of IX.29, and it is constructed of the usual building blocks of soma hymns, particularly those in gāyatrī meter. It clusters especially closely with the three hymns that precede it: these four hymns (IX.27–30) are all attributed to poets with the patronymic Āṅgirasa, and all four contain at least one form of *śúṣma* "tempestuous force" or *śuṣmín* "tempestuous" (IX.27.6; 28.6; 29.6; 30.1, 3), mostly in the final verse. This word thus seems to be the signature of this little group of poets. (The word does not pattern closely with other Āṅgirasa poets, even in the IXth Maṇḍala.)

1. His streams have flowed forth, those of the tempestuous one, into the
   filter at will.
   While becoming purified, he sends out his speech.
2. The drop, being impelled by the pressers, being groomed, ever roaring,
   raises a call appropriate to Indra.
3. Attract for us tempestuous force that can overcome men, much-craved
   force consisting of heroes,
   when you purify yourself in a stream, o Soma.
4. Soma, purifying himself in a stream, has flowed forth, beyond (the filter),
   to the wooden cups to take his seat.
5. They impel you, the most honeyed tawny one, in the waters with their
   stones,
   for Indra to drink, o drop.
6. Press the most honeyed soma for Indra who bears the mace,
   the dear, exhilarating one for his warrior band.

IX.31 (743) Soma Pavamāna

Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Another unremarkable gāyatrī hymn. Parallel constructions and phraseology (e.g., the fronted "for you" [*túbhyam*] in vss. 3, 5, the fronted "be/become" [*bhávā*] of vss. 2, 4) give a sense of unity. Unlike many soma hymns, where the finale delivers the soma to Indra (e.g., the final verses of nearby hymns such as IX.23.6–7, 26.6, 27.6, 30.6), here it is "we" who declare our desire for his presence and partnership (vs. 6).

The poet, Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, is also the composer of a soma hymn in the first maṇḍala, I.91, and verse 4 in this hymn is identical to I.91.16, which occurs in a triad of ritually connected verses.

1. The self-purifying soma juices have marched forth rich in purpose.
   They make wealth manifest.
2. Become the increaser of brilliance from heaven and from earth, o drop;
   become the lord of prizes.
3. For you rush the favoring winds, for you the rivers.
   O Soma, they increase your greatness.
4. Swell here, and let bullish power come together for you from all
      sides, Soma.
   Be at the gathering for the prize.
5. For you, o brown one, the cows have yielded imperishable ghee
      and milk
   upon the highest back.
6. You—who have good weapons, who are really present, o lord of
      creation—
   we want your fellowship, o drop.

IX.32 (744) Soma Pavamāna

Śyāvāśva Ātreya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Although this hymn begins with the almost ubiquitous journeying forth of the soma juices (see, e.g., the first verses of IX.10, 17, 20, 24, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 41, 44, all beginning, like this, with *prá* "forth" followed by a verb of motion somewhere in the verse), it breaks the pattern of the recent collections of Soma clichés, especially with the cascade of similes in verses 3–5. This expert handling of the constricted form of gāyatrī soma hymns may lend credence to the Anukramaṇī's attribution to Śyāvāśva Ātreya, the ingenious poet of the Marut cycle in Maṇḍala V.

1. The soma juices, arousing exhilaration, pressed at the rite, have marched forth
   for the fame of our benefactor.
2. Then the maidens of Trita [=fingers] impel him, the tawny one, with the stones,
   the drop for Indra to drink.
3. Then, just as (the lead) wild goose (sets) its flock (to honking), he has made the thought of everyone bellow.
   Like a steed he is anointed [/driven together] with the cows.
4. O Soma, looking down on both (worlds?), like a great wild bird launched in flight you rush,
   settling down on the womb of truth.
5. The cows have lowed to him, like a young woman to her dear lover.
   He has gone to (them?) as to a contest that has been set.
6. Destine brilliant glory for us, both for our benefactors and for me—
   wisdom and fame as our winnings.

IX.33 (745) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
6 verses: gāyatrī

Once again the hymn begins with the soma flowing forth. There is, however, less emphasis on the physical process of purification, and more on the sounds that accompany it: verse 4 introduces three voices, which may be the three types of ritual speech, the r̥c, yajus, and sāman familiar from later śrauta ritual, or may refer to the priestly formulations (5a), the bellowing of the cows (4b), and the roar of the rushing soma itself (4c). The theme continues in verse 5, which also highlights "truth," found in verse 2 as well.

The hymn is bookended by watery references: the simile of the waves of water in verse 1 returns in the final verse (6) as the seas of wealth that soma will produce for us.

1. Forth go the soma juices, attentive to poetic inspiration, like waves of the waters,
   to the wooden (cups) like buffaloes to the woods.
2. To the wooden cups they have flowed, brown and gleaming, in a stream of truth,
   to the prize of cows.
3. Pressed for Indra and Vāyu, for Varuṇa and the Maruts,
   for Viṣṇu, the soma juices rush.
4. The three voices rise up, the milk-cows bellow,
   and the tawny one goes ever roaring.

5. The sacred formulations, youthfully exuberant mothers of truth, have lowed to him.
   They keep grooming the child of heaven.
6. Four seas of wealth for us, Soma, from every direction,
   in the thousands—bring these in purifying yourself.

IX.34 (746) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with the usual rushing forth of the soma, but achieves an unusual ring, since in the last verse (6) it is the songs that rush (using the same verb, *arṣa(n)ti*) to him. What lies between is, for the most part, unremarkable. Verse 2 lists the recipients of the soma, a longer list than usual (and a verse almost identical to vs. 3 in the previous hymn, IX.33), and verses 3–4 concern the preparation of the drink. However, verse 5 is difficult: the Maruts milk for themselves (or yield as their milk) the oblation in the direction of "the upper surface of truth." Although in the context of the hymn, soma should be the product of milking (see vs. 3), the liquid the Maruts ordinarily milk is rain. Moreover, "the upper surface of truth" is a puzzling phrase, which occurs elsewhere only in the mystical and baffling Vena hymn (X.123.2). Since the latter hymn seems to concern the mystical identification between soma and the sun, it is likely that here too we have double reference, with the ritual substance soma assimilated to the cosmic fecundator, the rain, and "the upper surface of truth" referring both to the soma filter and to heaven (or the reservoir of rain in heaven).

1. Being pressed, being impelled, the drop rushes forth in its full measure in a stream,
   shattering the fastnesses by its might.
2. Pressed for Indra and Vāyu, for Varuṇa and the Maruts,
   for Viṣṇu, the soma rushes.
3. The bull controlled by bulls, the soma, do they press with stones.
   They milk out its milk with their skill.
4. It becomes the one for Trita to groom; it becomes the drink of exhilaration for Indra.
   The tawny one is anointed with the forms (of milk).
5. They whose mother is Pṛ́śni [=Maruts] milk for themselves the cherished oblation dearest to them
   toward the upper surface of truth.
6. These unswerving songs, flowing together, rush to him.
   Bellowing, he has made the milk-cows bellow.

IX.35 (747) Soma Pavamāna

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Soma as the source and support of wealth and as ally in conflict is the theme of this hymn, which is characterized by pleasing etymological figures (e.g., vss. 3, 4, 6) and variant repetitions (e.g., vss. 2 + 5).

1. Bringing broad wealth for us, o self-purifying one, purify yourself in a stream
   with which you will find the light for us.
2. You drop who set the sea to swaying, who set all in motion, purify yourself
   as the supporter of our wealth with your strength.
3. With you as hero, you possessor of heroes, might we overcome those who give battle.
   Stream toward us what is choice.
4. The drop sends forth (its speech), the prizewinning seer seeking to win the prize,
   finding his commandments to be his weapons.
5. Him who sets speech to swaying do we clothe with songs as he is being purified—
   Soma, the herdsmaster of the people.
6. Under whose commandment all people find support—under that of the master of support
   who brings outstanding goods while he is being purified.

IX.36 (748) Soma Pavamāna

Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with a noble image of Soma as a racehorse racing to the finish, and the second verse contains another equine comparison, though with a more lowly type of horse. This theme is abandoned until the final verse (6), when Soma goes seeking horses for the worshipers. The hymn is otherwise a fairly standard soma hymn, though one might note that the connection of soma with light made in the previous hymn (attributed to the same poet), IX.35.1, is also found here in verse 3. Also, every verse but the last contains a form derived from the root *pū* "purify," always pāda-initial.

1. He has been let loose like a chariot-horse into the filter, pressed into the two cups.
   The prizewinner has stepped upon the finish-line.
2. As wakeful draft-horse, o Soma, purify yourself, pursuing the gods, beyond (the filter),
   toward the cask dripping with honey.
3. O age-old self-purifying one, make the lights shine forth for us;
   impel us toward will, toward skill.
4. Being beautified by those who seek truth, being groomed in the two hands,
   he purifies himself in the sheep's fleece.
5. All goods for the pious man—heavenly, earthly, and those of the midspace—
   let Soma bring in purifying himself.
6. O Soma, you mount the back of heaven, seeking cows, seeking horses,
   seeking heroes, o lord of strength.

IX.37 (749) Soma Pavamāna

Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Several overt devices provide unity to this hymn: each verse begins with *sá* "he," and each verse but 4 contains a verb of motion ("rush, run, flow") expressing the journey of the soma through the filter and into the cups for Indra. In addition to the mundane details of the preparation, however, the hymn makes cosmic claims for the ritual actions. The sheep's fleece of verse 3 also stands for "the luminous realms of heaven"; in verse 5 Soma finds a wide realm, usually a symbol of freedom and the acquisition of territory.

Verse 4, the pause on the journey, has been much discussed, and its various phrases, "on the back of Trita," "along with (his) relatives," also given cosmic referents (though there is no scholarly agreement on just what they are). We are of the opinion, however, that it primarily concerns the ritual preparation: the "back of Trita" is the filter and the "relatives" (*jāmí*) are, as usual in a soma context, the fingers of the officiant, namely Trita (see "Trita's maidens," the fingers, in the next hymn, IX.38.2). It is this ritual preparation that allows the cosmic act of Soma, making the sun shine (at the Morning Pressing), in that same verse (4).

1. He, the bullish soma, pressed for drinking, rushes into the filter,
   smashing aside the demons, seeking the gods.
2. He, the tawny one, wide-gazing, rushes steadily into the filter,
   continually neighing toward his womb.

3. He, the prizewinner, self-purifying, runs through the luminous realms of heaven,
 through the sheep's fleece, as demon-smasher.
4. He, purifying himself on the back of Trita along with Trita's kin [=fingers],
 has made the sun shine.
5. He, the Vṛtra-smasher, the bull, finding the wide realm when pressed, undeceivable—
 Soma has flowed as if to a prize.
6. He, the god impelled by the poet, runs to the wooden cups—
 the drop with his munificence for Indra.

IX.38 (750) Soma Pavamāna

Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

Like the previous hymn, attributed to the same poet, this hymn is unified by the repetition of a pronominal phrase at the beginning of every verse (*eṣá syá* "this very one," except for vs. 2, which has only the first pronoun). It, too, concerns Soma's journey through the filter (especially the first and last verses, 1 and 6) and his manipulation by the officiant's fingers (vss. 2, 3). The hymn is enlivened by metaphors and similes, particularly those of verse 4.

1. This very one, a bull, a chariot, rushes through the sheep's fleece,
 going to the thousandfold prize.
2. This tawny one do the maidens of Trita [=fingers] impel with the stones,
 the drop for Indra to drink.
3. This very one do the ten tawny ones keep grooming, hard at work,
 those by whom he is beautified for exhilaration.
4. This very one settles among the human clans like a falcon (on a nest),
 going like a swain to a maiden.
5. This very one, the exhilarating juice, looks down, the child of heaven,
 the drop who entered the fleece.
6. This very one, the tawny one pressed for drinking, rushes steadily,
 neighing toward his own dear womb.

IX.39 (751) Soma Pavamāna

Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn is structured as a ring of sorts: it begins and ends with quoted direct speech, uttered by unidentified speakers but most likely priests. In verse 1 Soma makes his journey through the filter to the place on the ritual ground where the gods await their oblation. When he arrives there in verse 6, the priests order him to take his seat. In between, Soma's journey involves travel in both ritual and cosmic space (see esp. vss. 2, 4).

1. You of lofty thought, swiftly rush around through your dear domain,
   to where they will say "(here are) the gods."
2. Preparing what was not fully prepared, arranging the refreshments for
   the people,
   stream the rain from heaven all about.
3. Pressed, he goes into the filter, taking on vibrancy with his strength,
   gazing widely, producing wide illumination.
4. Here he is—the one with a rapid course who has flowed widely from
   heaven into the filter,
   into the swell of the river.
5. Seeking to lure from afar, and also from nearby, the pressed one
   is poured as honey for Indra.
6. United they have roared. They impel the tawny one with the stones,
   (saying,) "Sit in the womb of truth."

IX.40 (752) Soma Pavamāna

Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn begins with a martial theme that is not developed in what follows. Instead, beginning with verse 3, the focus is on the wealth that Soma will bring us, and the repetition of vocabulary in these four verses induces a sense of claustrophobia, with the same elements recycled: "o Soma," "o drop," "purifying," "bring us," and "wealth." Although claustrophobia is to some extent endemic to the IXth Maṇḍala, most hymns make some attempt to vary the lexicon and phraseology.

1. Becoming purified, the limitless one has attacked all the scorners.
   They [=poets] beautify the inspired poet with their inspired thoughts.
2. The ruddy one has mounted to the womb; the bull, when pressed, will go
   to Indra.
   He sits in the steadfast seat.

3. Now for us, o drop, for us all all around, o Soma, attract great wealth
   in thousands, in purifying yourself.
4. O self-purifying Soma, o drop, bring all brilliant things hither;
   you will find refreshments in thousands.
5. Being purified, bring hither wealth and an abundance of heroes to our
   praise singer;
   strengthen the songs of the singer.
6. Being purified, o drop, bring hither double-lofty wealth—o Soma,
   bullish drop—bring us wealth worthy of hymns.

IX.41 (753) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn and the next two (IX.41–43) are attributed to Medhyātithi Kāṇva, the poet of several hymns in Maṇḍala VIII (VIII.1, 3, 33), who names himself in IX.43.3. This hymn begins strikingly, with an incomplete sentence describing the stampede of a wild mob, against the "black skin," presumably the Dasyu referred to in verse 2. The constituents of the mob are not identified, but are presumably the soma juices, here mobilized against the non-Ārya enemy. The second verse rewrites this scene more tranquilly, though with the victory over the Dasyu more explicit. But the violence of Soma's purificatory journey returns in verse 3.

The second half of the hymn is more conventional, though with Soma's cosmic associations clear in the last two verses (5–6).

1. Those who strode forth like cattle—frenzied, turbulent, unruly,
   smashing away the black skin [=Dasyus]—
2. We will bring to mind the easy passage (of Soma), beyond the snare
   difficult to navigate [=the curly fleece filter],
   we having overcome the Dasyu who follows no commandment.
3. A roar like that of rain is heard—the roar of the self-purifying
   tempestuous one.
   Lightning flashes roam in heaven.
4. O drop, in purifying yourself attract great refreshment and wealth in
   cattle, in gold,
   in horses, and in prizes, when you are pressed.
5. Purify yourself, limitless one. Fill the two great world-halves
   as Dawn does, as the sun does with its rays.
6. O Soma, flow for us in a protecting stream all around on all sides,
   like (the heavenly river) Rasā, along the upper surface (of the filter).

IX.42 (754) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

The double affiliation of Soma with the ritual and cosmic realms leads off the hymn: in verse 1 he performs major cosmogonic deeds while participating in his ritual preparation, mixing with milk and being washed in water. This twofold theme continues through the hymn, as, for example, in verse 4 where Soma begets the gods while being poured in the filter. The hymn ends (vs. 6) with a wish for the same material benefits found in the preceding hymn, IX.41.4.

1. Begetting the luminous realms of heaven, begetting the sun in the waters,
   clothing himself in cows, in the waters—the tawny one—
2. He, by means of an age-old thought, a god from among the gods,
   purifies himself in a stream, when pressed.
3. For the ever-increasing victor [=Indra] to win the prize, they purify
   themselves—
   the thousand-faceted soma juices.
4. Milking out his age-old milk, he is poured around into the filter.
   Roaring, he has begotten the gods.
5. Toward all desirable things, toward the gods who become strong through truth.
   Soma rushes while he is being purified.
6. O Soma, when you are pressed, bring us (wealth) in cattle, in heroes, in
   horses and prizes,
   and lofty refreshments in purifying yourself.

IX.43 (755) Soma Pavamāna

Medhyātithi Kāṇva
6 verses: gāyatrī

In this last hymn attributed to Medhyātithi, he is at particular pains to draw attention to the importance of the poet's role in the preparation of the soma. Not only does he name himself in verse 3, but the first three verses emphasize the clothing (vs. 1), beautification (vs. 2), and adornment (vs. 3) of Soma with hymns. In the final verse (6) he asks for a proper recompense for the poet (that is, himself) who produces these hymns.

1. The one who is groomed like a steed with cows [=milk], for exhilaration,
   the delightful one—
   him do we clothe with hymns.
2. Him do all our hymns, seeking aid, beautify in the ancient way—
   the drop for Indra to drink.

3. While being purified, he makes his journey—the delightful Soma,
 adorned with the hymns
 of the inspired poet Medhyātithi.
4. Self-purifying Soma, for us find very beautiful wealth
 of a thousand lusters, o drop.
5. The drop, like a steed running for the prize, keeps neighing in the filter,
 when he has overflowed it, in search of the gods.
6. Purify yourself for prizewinning, for the strengthening of the inspired
 poet who hymns you.
 Soma, give us an abundance of heroes.

IX.44 (756) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The poet of the next three hymns (IX.44–46) seems to owe his Anukramaṇī identification to the word *ayā́sya* "irrepressible" in the first verse of this first hymn, where it is applied to Soma. Insofar as there is a theme in this hymn, it is Soma's relation to the gods (vss. 1, 3, 5) and his intermediary role between the gods and us, especially us poets (vss. 2, 5).

1. O drop, you rush forth for our great extension, like (a river) bearing a wave,
 irrepressible, toward the gods.
2. Soma is impelled in the distance, delighted by the thought, impelled by
 the insight
 of the inspired poet—(Soma himself) a sage poet—in a stream.
3. This one, wakeful among the gods, goes pressed into the filter.
 Soma the limitless is making his journey.
4. Purify yourself for us, seeking prizes, making the dear ceremony your own.
 The one with the ritual grass [=priest] seeks to lure (you) here.
5. He whose heroes are poets, growing ever stronger for Bhaga, for Vāyu—
 Soma will guide us to the gods.
6. You who find the will, who best find the way—in order to give us goods today,
 win the prize and lofty praise.

IX.45 (757) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

The hymn is defined by a thematic ring: Soma has his gaze on men in verse 1 and in the final verse (6) he gazes out on the reward he gives to his human praiser. Soma,

as usual, goes on his purificatory journey through the filter (vss. 1–2) and is mixed with milk (vs. 3), but unlike many of the recent soma hymns, this one also focuses on the stage beyond the filter, with striking images in verses 4 and 5.

1. Having your gaze on men, purify yourself for exhilaration, for the pursuit of the gods,
   o drop, and for Indra to drink.
2. Rush on your mission for us—you spill out for Indra—
   rush to the gods for us, your comrades, at will.
3. And we anoint you, the ruddy one, with cows for exhilaration.
   Open up the doors for wealth for us.
4. He has stepped beyond the filter, like a prize-seeking (horse) the chariot-pole on its course.
   The drop plays the lord among the gods.
5. His comrades cried out in unison to him as he was playing in the wood(en vessel), beyond the sheep [=fleece].
   To the drop the roars have roared.
6. Purify yourself in that stream in which, once drunk, you will gaze out upon
   an abundance of heroes for your praiser, o drop.

IX.46 (758) Soma Pavamāna

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
6 verses: gāyatrī

This hymn surveys some familiar themes, particularly the role of the fingers in preparing the soma (vss. 4, 6), though it is perhaps noteworthy that the filter, so prominent in many soma hymns, is not explicitly present here. In contrast, some qualities of soma known from elsewhere that are rarely or never mentioned in the IXth Maṇḍala make their appearance—in particular his source in the mountains (vs. 1) and in verse 4 the technical distinction between "pure" (that is, unmixed) soma (*śukrá*) and soma with grain stirred in (*manthín*, a word otherwise only found once elsewhere in the Ṛgveda [III.32.2]). (In the later śrauta ritual, cups of *śukra* and *manthin* soma form both a ritual and a grammatical pair, in the dual dvandva compound *śukrā-manthinau*, here found in discontinuous form.) The gods Vāyu (vs. 2) and Indra (vss. 3, 6), recipients of the first soma oblations at the Morning Pressing, are named. Verse 2 contains a striking image of the soma drops adorned like a girl for marriage.

1. They have been released to pursue the gods, like steeds that get results,
   flowing, grown strong in the mountains.
2. The drops, adorned like a maiden with her patrimony,
   the soma drinks have been released to Vāyu.

3. These soma juices, the drops, dispensing delight when pressed in the cup,
   strengthen Indra along with the (ritual) activities.
4. Rinse it, you (fingers) of good hands; grasp the two (soma drinks), the
   stirred and the pure.
   Mix the exhilarating one with cows.
5. Purify yourself, you winner of stakes, as provider of great bounty
   and as pathfinder for us, o Soma.
6. The ten fingers groom this one worth grooming, the self-purifying
   exhilarating drink of exhilaration for Indra.

IX.47 (759) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

The next three hymns (IX.47–49) are attributed to Kavi Bhārgava, to whom the Anukramaṇī also credits the five Jagatī hymns IX.75–79. The Soma of this hymn is distinctly militant, using the power he has acquired (vs. 1) to destroy the Dasyus (vs. 2) and win spoils, as Indra's very mace (vss. 3, 5). But the same Soma is both a poet (vs. 4) and a recipient of poetry (vs. 3), who facilitates the human poet's acquisition of treasure from his patron (vs. 4).

1. Through this good ritual performance Soma has waxed strong even over
   the great ones.
   Becoming exhilarated, he up and acts the bull.
2. His deeds done and to be done, crushing the Dasyus, are conspicuous,
   and the bold one exacts recompense for debts.
3. Then Soma, the sap destined for Indra, becomes a mace winning
   thousands,
   when a hymn is born for him.
4. Himself a sage poet, he seeks a treasure for the inspired poet at (the
   hands of) the distributor,
   as he keeps grooming his insightful thoughts.
5. Desirous of winning riches, as of winning chargers at prize-contests,
   you are among those who are victorious in the raids.

IX.48 (760) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

The poet begins his hymn with a request for benefit, though a rather generic one (vs. 1). The militant theme of the previous hymn is visible in verse 2, while the story of the falcon's theft of Soma from heaven, a myth not prominent elsewhere in Maṇḍala IX, is the subject of verses 3–4. Unlike most of the gāyatrī soma hymns, this one contains no explicit reference to the preparation of the soma, with only a glancing mention of the "impelling" of soma in the final verse (5), a term generally used in IX of the push that starts the soma on its purificatory journey through the filter.

1. You who bear your manly powers among the seats of great heaven
   we implore for something dear through this good ritual performance—
2. You who have encoiled the bold and are worthy of hymns, having very
   great commandments, exhilarating,
   eager to break a hundred strongholds.
3. From there, from heaven, the unfaltering falcon brought
   you, the king, to wealth, o strong-willed one.
4. It was for everyone to see the sun that the bird brought you as one (to be)
   held in common,
   the herdsman of truth, crossing through the airy realm.
5. And now, being impelled, he has acquired more eminent greatness,
   appropriate to Indra,
   as the limitless creator of superiority.

IX.49 (761) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: gāyatrī

Each verse of this hymn contains a form (two in vs. 3) of the root *pū* "purify," all verbs except for the "filter" word (*pavítram*) in verse 4; the three middle verses (3–5) also all contain the instrumental *dhā́rayā* "in a stream." The hymn thus has a tight lexical structure, and the content is similarly limited, to wishes for rain as refreshment and nourishment (vss. 1, 3–4) and for increase in cattle (vs. 3). The first four verses contain imperatives addressed to Soma, the last verse a 3rd-person past tense, suggesting that the wishes expressed have been fulfilled.

1. Purify yourself, bringing rain to us, a wave of waters from heaven,
   lofty refreshments free from disease.
2. Purify yourself in that stream by which the people's cows
   will come here, right up to our house.

3. Purify yourself in a stream as ghee, you who best pursue the gods at the sacrifices;
   for us bring rain through purification.
4. For our nourishment run through the fleecy filter in a stream,
   for the gods will surely listen!
5. Purifying himself, he has flowed, constantly smashing away demons,
   making the lights light up as of old.

IX.50 (762) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

The next three hymns (IX.50–52) are attributed to the same poet, who is not otherwise found in the R̥gveda. This hymn has a distinct focus on sound, that of Soma as he is being prepared (vs. 1), of (probably) the officiating priests (vs. 3), and of the ritual chant (vs. 4). A potential pun in verse 2 suggests that the priestly voices there are both competing with each other and seeking the sacrificial reward. Verse 5 contains another potential pun, with the same word (*aktú*) meaning both "ointments" and "nights."

1. Your snortings rise up like the roar of the wave of a river.
   Spur on the wheel-rim of the music.
2. At your stimulus there rise up three voices ready for combat [/seeking bounty],
   when you go onto the back of the sheep.
3. On the sheep's fleece with stones they drive the dear tawny one around,
   purifying himself, dripping with honey.
4. Purify yourself in a stream in the filter, you most exhilarating poet,
   to sit in the womb of chant.
5. Purify yourself, most exhilarating one, being anointed with cows as ointments [/through the nights],
   o drop, for Indra to drink.

IX.51 (763) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

This simple hymn sets Soma in relation both to the humans involved in his preparation, namely the Adhvaryu priest (vs. 1) and the praiser (vs. 4), and to the gods who consume him, Indra (vss. 1–2), the gods in general, and the Maruts (vs. 3). The entry into the filter, mentioned in verses 1 and 5, provides an elementary ring.

1. O Adhvaryu, send the soma, pressed by stones, surging into the filter.
   Purify it for Indra to drink.
2. The highest beestings of heaven, the most honeyed soma—
   press it for Indra who bears the mace.
3. Of your stalk, of your honey, o drop, do these gods eat;
   of you, the self-purifying one, do the Maruts.
4. For you, Soma, are strengthening when you are pressed for fervent
   exhilaration,
   to help the praiser, you bull.
5. O wide-gazing one, pressed in a stream, rush into the filter
   to the prize of victory and to fame.

IX.52 (764) Soma Pavamāna

Ucathya Āṅgirasa
5 verses: gāyatrī

Unlike the very straightforward preceding hymn (IX.51) attributed to the same poet, this one is full of tricks, especially in the middle verse (3), which can thus be viewed as an omphalos. The contents of the first two verses are conventional enough—the entry of Soma into the filter—but they contain several instances of phonological and morphological play, as do the final two verses (4–5). These cannot be conveyed in translation.

Verse 3, characterized by the repetition of the verb *īṅkhaya* ("push, shove") of highly marked formation, has a slangy and disparaging tone. Its object is generally interpreted, in our opinion correctly, as a reference to an ungenerous rich man, perhaps the poet's patron. He is compared to a pot, no doubt both because he is full of goods and because of his stodgy demeanor, and the soma drop is urged to prod this miser into giving.

Two matching compounds, *sanád-rayiḥ* "gaining wealth" (vs. 1) and *maṃhayád-rayiḥ* "readying wealth" (vs. 5), provide a thematic and grammatical ring.

1. Heaven-ruling, gaining wealth, bringing a prize to us with your stalk,
   being pressed, rush around into the filter.
2. Along your age-old routes, around onto the sheep's fleece, the dear one
   drives, a thousand streams in extent.
3. The one who is like a pot, give him a shove; give a shove to the one who
   doesn't give on his own, o drop.
   Give him a shove with your strokes, you striker.
4. (Strike) down the bluster of those people, o much-invoked drop,
   of anyone who takes aim at us.
5. With a hundred forms of help for us, o drop, or with a thousand
   gleaming (soma drinks),
   purify yourself, readying wealth.

IX.53 (765) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verse: gāyatrī

The next eight hymns (IX.53–60) are attributed to the same poet as V.44, a hymn to the All Gods often declared to be the hardest hymn in the Ṛgveda. Although these brief soma hymns have some interesting features, they lack the mind-boggling verbal pyrotechnics of that hymn.

On the other hand, the organizing principle of V.44 is the double application of each verse to two different divinities, Agni and Soma, with a lexicon ambiguous enough to allow both interpretations. Something of the same thing is visible in this hymn, in which each verse but the last (4) invites the audience to supply a referent different from the one meant. The first verse deploys clear Indraic vocabulary, particularly the vocative "possessor of the stone," though Soma can, and should, be its subject. The first two-thirds of the second verse (2ab) suggest either Indra or Soma as referent, until the 1st singular verb form "I will praise" that opens the last pāda establishes the 1st-person speaker as the referent. Again, the third verse opens like a verse to Varuṇa or another Āditya, and only the "self-purifying" that begins the second pāda ties it to Soma. It is only the last verse that contains unmistakable somian vocabulary and which, in its final pāda, clarifies the roles of the drop (*índu*) and Indra.

1. Your blasts have arisen, splitting the demonic power, you possessor of
   the stone.
   Push aside the challengers all around
2. With this (insightful thought), slamming down with strength when
   chariots clash and a prize is set,
   I will praise with fearless heart.
3. The commandments of this self-purifying one cannot be ventured
   against by one of bad insight.
   Break the one who battles you.
4. Into the rivers they impel him who arouses exhilaration, the tawny one
   who seeks the prize,
   the drop exhilarating to Indra.

IX.54 (766) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

Like the last hymn, this one withholds unambiguous identification until the end of the hymn, while employing suggestive vocabulary in the earlier verses. However, unlike the last hymn, the poet does not try to mislead the audience into supplying

the "wrong" referent. Rather, the hymn is structured as a series of explicit riddles: a form of the pronoun *ayám* "this one" opens each of the first three verses (and also 2b), and what is predicated of "this one" fits, or can fit, the Soma paradigm. The explicit solution to the riddle is given in the last pāda of verse 3, with the name Soma prominently situated. And the final verse brings the drop (*índu*) and Indra together in the same way as IX.53.4.

1. In accord with the age-old brilliance of this one, they have milked the gleaming, immoderate
   milk from the seer who wins thousands.
2. This one is a sight like the sun; this one runs to the lakes,
   along the seven slopes, to heaven.
3. This one, being purified, stands above all beings
   like the Sun-god: he is Soma.
4. To pursue the gods for us, you rush around the prizes consisting of cows,
   being purified, o drop, seeking Indra.

IX.55 (767) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

The first three verses of the hymn are unified by a reference to the stalk (*ándhas*) of the soma plant, although the role of the stalk is somewhat vague. Verse 1 is notable for its mention of agriculture, though again the relevance is not entirely clear. The martial Soma is on display in verse 4.

1. Stream around to us grain upon grain, fruiting upon fruiting with your stalk,
   o Soma, and all the gifts of good fortune.
2. O drop, just as there is praise of you (now), just as (the honey) has been born from your stalk,
   (so) sit down on the dear ritual grass.
3. And as cow-finder for us, horse-finder, purify yourself, Soma, with your stalk
   through the days soonest to come.
4. Who conquers and is not conquered, who smashes his rival on just confronting him—
   as such a one, purify yourself, o winner of thousands.

IX.56 (768) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

The first three verses of this simple hymn describe Soma's journey in the filter (vs. 1), as the liquid separates into multiple streams in the channels of the fleece (vs. 2), and his preparation by the fingers (vs. 3). The fourth verse then requests protection for ourselves and our men, while urging the soma to flow for its divine recipients.

1. Swift Soma, as lofty truth, rushes about in the filter,
   smashing apart the demons, seeking the gods,
2. When Soma rushes toward the prize, as a hundred hardworking streams,
   entering fellowship with Indra.
3. The ten young women have cried out to you, like a maiden to her lover.
   You are groomed, o Soma, for winning.
4. You, o drop, the sweet one—flow around for Indra, for Viṣṇu.
   Protect the superior men, the praisers from difficult straits.

IX.57 (769) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

In this little hymn, Soma is explicitly or implicitly compared to rain (vs. 1), a warrior (vs. 2), a law-abiding king or his subject (vs. 3), and a falcon in its nest (vs. 3). The ambiguity of the term "keeping his commandments well, having good commandments" in verse 3 allows the description to apply either to the imposer of the commandments, the king, or to those who abide by them, the vassals. The final verse (4) is, as so often, the locus of our requests.

1. Your streams go forth inexhaustible, like rains from heaven,
   to the thousandfold prize.
2. Toward the dear (products of) poetic skill, observing all does he rush,
   the tawny one brandishing his weapons.
3. Constantly being groomed by the Āyus, keeping his commandments like
      a vassal (or) a king,
   like a falcon he sits in the wood(en vessel)s.
4. All goods from heaven and from the earth
   bring hither to us, while being purified, o drop.

IX.58 (770) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

A curious little hymn or hymn-fragment. All four verses have a pāda-length refrain, which is entirely applicable to Soma, and the hymn begins with this same refrain. The first verse is clearly a soma verse throughout, but verse 2 is more appropriate to Dawn and verses 3 and 4 appear to be an abbreviated dānastuti. The patrons named in verse 3 are identified as protegés of the Aśvins in I.112.23 (though with the first in slightly different form); middle Vedic literature also has a confused tradition about these same personages.

1. In crossing, the invigorating one runs, the stream of the pressed stalk.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
2. The ruddy goddess knows of the goods, of the help of the mortal.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
3. At (the hands of) Dhvasra and Puruṣanti we take thousands.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.
4. At (the hands of) those two we take thirty and thousands in extent.
   – In crossing, the invigorating one runs.

IX.59 (771) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

Each of the four verses contains at least one form of "purify oneself/self-purifying," with three such imperatives in verse 2. That verse seems to contain a trio of elemental substances, which are also connected with the ritual: waters, plants, and, in our interpretation, the hearths as holy places, representative of fire. Soma as finder of good things for us provides a thematic ring for the hymn; in verse 1 he finds the material and psychological goods men desire, while in verse 4 he has raised the stakes to the cosmic level.

1. Purify yourself, Soma, as cow-winner, horse-winner, all-winner,
   joy-winner.
   Bring here a treasure consisting of offspring.
2. Purify yourself undeceivable for the waters; purify yourself for the plants;
   purify yourself for the Holy Places.
3. Purifying yourself, Soma, cross all difficult passages.
   As poet sit down on the ritual grass.
4. Self-purifying one, you find the sun; on just being born, you became great.
   Drop, you dominate all.

IX.60 (772) Soma Pavamāna

Avatsāra Kāśyapa
4 verses: gāyatrī

A satisfyingly tight structure knits together this little hymn. The first and last verses contain the epithet "boundless" (*vícarṣaṇi*) providing a faint ring. More salient is the chaining from verse to verse: a significant portion of the final pāda of one verse opens the next verse.

The hymn also has extra-hymnic structural echoes: its final pāda is identical to the final pāda of the first verse of the preceding hymn (IX.59.1), ascribed to the same poet, save for "semen" in place of "treasure."

1. Sing forth with a song to the boundless self-purifying one,
   the drop with a thousand eyes.
2. You, possessing a thousand eyes and bringing a thousand presents,
   they have purified across the fleece.
3. Across the fleeces the self-purifying one has streamed. He runs into the tubs,
   entering the heart of Indra.
4. For the generosity of Indra, purify yourself as luck, o boundless Soma.
   Bring here semen providing offspring.

IX.61 (773) Soma Pavamāna

Amahīyu Āṅgirasa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The first sixty hymns of the Soma Maṇḍala, all in gāyatrī meter, are arranged in the normal order of descending number of verses, starting with hymns of ten verses and ending with those of four. (The only exception is the Āprī hymn, IX.5, which has eleven.) But the gāyatrī sequence ends with six thirty-verse hymns (IX.61–66), followed by one with thirty-two verses (IX.67)—all arranged in tr̥cas (the final two verses in IX.67 are supplements) and each attributed to a different poet or group of poets—before the jagatī group begins. It is probably not an accident that these groupings of tr̥cas come at the end of the gāyatrī sequence, since, as agglomerations of three-verse sequences, they logically follow the four-verse hymns.

In this particular hymn there is little evidence of unity either within tr̥cas or between them: the standard topics of soma hymns—the details of preparation (e.g., vss. 4–5) and the gods for whom he's prepared (e.g., vss. 8–9), the cosmic connections of Soma (e.g., vss. 10, 16, 18), and the largesse and aid we ask him for (e.g., vss. 3, 23–24)—are strung together in no apparent order. There is a discernible tendency, however, to emphasize Soma's role in combating hostile forces, either directly or by strengthening someone else to do so, especially Indra. The hymn begins with two verses mentioning some of Indra's exploits performed under the influence of Soma, though without

naming Indra, and the theme of Soma the smiter and aggressive warrior returns toward the end of the hymn and dominates the last two tṛcas (vss. 19–20, 22, 24–30).

1. Flow around in pursuit (of him) who amid your raptures, o drop,
   smashed down the nine and ninety—
2. (Smashed down) the strongholds in one day for the one whose thought
   is to the point, (smashed down) Śambara for Divodāsa,
   and as for that Turvaśa and Yadu. . . .
3. Stream around to us horseflesh, as horse-finder, and (wealth) in cattle
   and gold, o drop,
   and thousandfold refreshments.

4. While you are purifying yourself, while you are flooding the filter, we
   choose your companionship.
5. Your waves that flow into the filter in a stream—
   with them be gracious to us, Soma.
6. Being purified, bring us wealth and refreshment consisting of heroes,
   while you hold sway everywhere, o Soma.

7. Just him do the ten fingers groom, him whose mother is the river(s).
   He has been reckoned among the Ādityas.
8. Pressed, he goes into the filter, uniting with Indra and Vāyu,
   uniting with the rays of the sun.
9. Purify yourself for us, honeyed for Bhaga, for Vāyu, for Pūṣan,
   dear to Mitra and Varuṇa.

10. It was born high above from your stalk; though it was in heaven, on
    earth it took for itself
    mighty shelter and great fame.
11. Seeking to gain all the brilliant things of humans from the stranger,
    with it we shall win them.
12. Flow around for worshipful Indra, for Varuṇa, for the Maruts,
    finding a wide realm for us.

13. Up to the one who, just born, crosses the waters, breaking through,
    adorned by cows—
    up to the drop have the gods traveled.
14. Only him let our hymns strengthen, as (cows) who share their young do a calf—
    him who gains the heart of Indra.
15. Rush as weal for our cow, Soma; milk out swelling refreshment.
    Increase the sea, worthy of hymns.

16. Purifying himself he has begotten thunder dazzling like that of heaven
    and the lofty light belonging to all men.
17. When you are purifying yourself, o king, your sap, the exhilarating
    drink that brings no misfortune,

rushes through the sheep's fleece.

18. Self-purifying one, your potent sap shines forth brilliant,
as light for everyone to see the sun.

19. Your exhilarating drink that is worthy to be chosen, with that stalk
purify yourself,
pursuing the gods, smashing those who utter evil.

20. Smashing Vr̥tra the hostile, winning the prize every day,
you are a winner of cows and of horses.

21. Become a ruddy (bull) mingling with milk-cows as if with (ladies) with
lovely laps,
sitting like a falcon on your womb.

22. Purify yourself, you who helped Indra to smash Vr̥tra,
who was obstructing the great waters.

23. Might we of good heroes win the stakes, o Soma the rewarder.
Becoming purified, strengthen our hymns.

24. Aided by you, with your help, might we be combative against
hindrances.
O Soma, be watchful over the commandments.

25. Smashing away the scorners, away the ungenerous, Soma purifies himself,
going to the rendezvous with Indra.

26. Bring great wealth here to us, self-purifying one; smash the scorners.
Give glory in heroes, o drop.

27. A hundred crooks [/wool tufts] will never confound you when you are
eager to give largesse,
when you, becoming purified, do battle [/act bounteously].

28. Purify yourself, o drop, when you, the bull, are pressed. Make us
glorious among the people.
Smash away all hatreds.

29. In the companionship of you here, in your highest brilliance, o drop, might we
overcome those who do battle.

30. Your fearful sharp weapons, which exist to injure,
(with them) guard us from the insult of anyone at all.

IX.62 (774) Soma Pavamāna

Jamadagni Bhārgava
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Though long, this hymn remains focused on the familiar details of the preparation of the soma, often ennobled by establishing cosmic parallels. The journey across

the fleece is especially prominent, and the soma is frequently likened to a fast horse. One verse, 17, is more specific than the usual generic treatments: here the soma is a horse yoked to the chariot of the sacrifice, which has three backs and three seats, presumably the three pressings and the three fires, by the visionary thoughts of the seven seers. It is also notable how often Soma is called a poet or connected with poetry in the second part of this hymn (vss. 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 30). In the final verse he is in fact called "the entruthed poet" or "the poet (who is) truth (itself)," a powerful expression of his relationship to creative speech.

Though some of the tr̥cas display internal formal unity (e.g., vss. 19–21 beginning with *ā́*), most do not. The poet to whom the hymn is attributed names himself in verse 24.

1. These drops have surged, swift across the filter,
   toward all gifts of good fortune.
2. The prize-seekers, smashing apart the many obstacles to progress,
   making the ways easy going for our offspring
   and for our steed by their own extension,
3. Making a wide realm for the cow, they rush toward the lovely
   praise hymn,
   toward lasting refreshment for us.

4. The plant has been pressed in the waters for exhilaration, the potent
   one abiding on a mountain.
   Like a falcon he has sat on his womb.
5. The beautiful stalk coveted by the gods—(the soma) rinsed in the
   waters, pressed by men—
   do the cows sweeten with their milk.
6. Then, like drivers a horse, they have beautified him for the immortal,
   the sap of honey for joint revelry.

7. Your streams, dripping with honey, which have surged for our aid,
   o drop,
   with them you have sat down on the filter.
8. Rush, for Indra to drink, across the sheep's fleece,
   sitting on your womb, in the wooden (vessels).
9. You, o drop, stream around—sweetest for the Aṅgirases,
   finding a wide realm—to the ghee, the milk.

10. Here has the limitless one been established; purifying himself, he takes
    note of
    lofty friendship while being impelled.
11. This bull following his bullish commandments, purifying himself,
    smashing malediction,
    will provide goods for the pious.

12. In purifying yourself bring wealth in thousands of cows and of horses,
much gleaming, much craved.

13. This one here is poured in circles, being continually groomed by the Āyus,
the wide-going one with a poet's purpose.
14. Possessing a thousand forms of help, a hundred bounties, measurer of the airy realm, poet—
the exhilarating drink purifies himself for Indra.
15. Born on a mountain [/begotten by a hymn], praised here, the drop is placed for Indra,
a bird in his womb, as if in a nest.

16. Purifying himself, pressed by men, Soma has flowed, as if to a prize,
to sit in the cups, through his mastery.
17. They yoke him to the three-backed, three-seated chariot, to drive,
yoking him by means of the seven visionary thoughts of the seven seers.
18. O pressers, impel the swift one to drive for the prize—the winner of spoils,
the tawny prize-seeker.

19. Pressed, entering the tub, rushing to all that is glorious,
he stands among the cows like a champion.
20. The Āyus milk your milk for exhilaration, o drop;
the gods (milk) honey for the gods.
21. Into the filter send our soma, the most honeyed
for the gods, the most audible to the gods.

22. These soma juices, while being hymned, have surged for great fame
in a stream of most exhilarating (soma).
23. You rush to pursue bovine (goods) and manly powers, while being purified.
Winning the prizes, flow around.
24. And rush to all our refreshments provided with cows, encircled with rhythm,
while being hymned by Jamadagni.

25. Purify yourself, Soma, with your bright help, going at the forefront of speech
toward all products of poetic skill.
26. You—going at the forefront, rousing the waters of the sea and the speeches—
purify yourself, o you who set everything in motion.
27. For you, o poet, do these worlds here take their stand, for your greatness, o Soma;
for you do the rivers rush.

28. Like rains from heaven your streams go forth inexhaustible,
    toward the gleaming underlayer.
29. For Indra purify the drop, the strong one bringing success to skill,
    the lord whose largesse is worth pursuing.
30. Self-purifying Soma, the entruthed poet, has sat in the filter,
    establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.

IX.63 (775) Soma Pavamāna

Nidhruvi Kāśyapa
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Like the last hymn, this one is much concerned with the ritual preparation of soma, but it sketches a larger conceptual world in which this preparation takes place. On the one hand, the purification is seen as a process of Ārya-ization (vs. 5), and the spaces that Soma traverses, for example the filter, become "Ārya domains" (vs. 14). The waters that Soma crosses (vss. 5, 21) and the rivers in which he is groomed (vs. 17) are both the ritual waters in which the soma plant is rinsed and rehydrated and, metaphorically, the frontier rivers the Āryas crossed in expanding their realms. (See also the mentions of finding or making "wide space" in the two preceding hymns [IX.61.12; 62.3, 9].)

On the other hand, Soma is compared to and identified with the Sun (especially in the third tr̥ca, vss. 7–9, also vs. 13), and his journey across the filter is also metaphorically the Sun's daily journey across the heaven. Since the ritual activity happens on earth, at the hands of Manu (vss. 7–8), the first sacrificer and the cultural ancestor of the Ārya, even the rising of the Sun is thus implicitly attributed to human agency.

The hymn is, of course, also full of requests for material goods of all sorts, and, especially toward the end, for Soma to smite all manner of enemies and hostile forces (vss. 24, 26, 28–29; also 5).

Although the hymn does not seem tightly structured, some tr̥cas show formal unity (e.g., vss. 25–27 with forms of the root *sr̥j* "surge"), and the hymn begins and ends with verses containing the imperative *dhāraya* "secure, sustain."

1. In purifying yourself, o Soma, bring wealth in thousands and an
       abundance of good heroes;
   secure our claims to fame for us.
2. You swell refreshment and nourishment; most exhilarating for Indra,
   you sit down here in the cups.
3. Pressed for Indra, for Viṣṇu, soma has streamed into the tub.
   Let it be honeyed for Vāyu.

4. These swift brown ones have surged across the tangles (of sheep's wool),
   the soma juices, in a stream of truth.

5. Strengthening Indra, crossing the waters, making it all Ārya,
   smashing away the non-givers,
6. The pressed juices rush along their own realm, the brown ones,
   the drops, going to Indra.

7. Purify yourself in the very stream with which you made the sun shine,
   impelling the waters belonging to Manu.
8. He has yoked Etaśa, (the steed) of the Sun, purifying himself in Manu's presence,
   to drive through the midspace.
9. And these ten tawny mares of the Sun he has yoked, to drive,
   the drop, announcing, "(I go) to Indra."

10. From here sprinkle in circles the soma pressed for Vāyu, the songs, (the soma) exhilarating to Indra,
    onto the sheep's fleece.
11. O self-purifying Soma, find wealth for us that is difficult to surpass,
    that is difficult to attain by one who craves it.
12. Rush toward wealth in thousands of cows and of horses,
    toward the prize of victory and fame.

13. Soma, like the Sun-god, purifies himself, pressed by stones,
    placing his own sap in the tub.
14. Across the Ārya domains these clear juices in a stream of truth
    have flowed to a prize of cows.
15. Pressed for Indra the mace-bearer, the soma juices, mixed with curds,
    have streamed across the filter.

16. O Soma, as the most honeyed, rush forth into the filter for wealth,
    as the exhilarating drink that best pursues the gods.
17. Him do the Āyus groom in the rivers, the tawny prize-seeker,
    the drop exhilarating to Indra.
18. In purifying yourself, o Soma, bring masses of gold, of horses, of heroes;
    bring hither a prize of cows.

19. As if sprinkling a prize-seeking (horse) when the prize (is set), sprinkle prize-seeking (soma) in circles onto the sheep's fleece,
    (the soma) most honeyed for Indra.
20. The inspired poets, seeking help, with their insights groom the sage poet worthy to be groomed.
    The bull rushes ever roaring.
21. To the water-crossing bull, Soma, in a stream of truth
    have the inspired poets cried out in unison with their insights, their thought.

22. Purify yourself, o god, attended by the Āyus. Let your exhilarating drink go to Indra;
    mount to Vāyu according to the (ritual) statute.
23. O self-purifying Soma, you spill down wealth worthy of fame.
    As dear one, enter the sea.
24. Smashing away the scorners, you purify yourself, finding the resolve, exhilarating, o Soma.
    Thrust from yourself the people who do not seek the gods.

25. The self-purifying soma juices, the clear drops have surged
    toward all products of poetic skill.
26. The swift, resplendent, self-purifying drops have surged,
    smashing away all hatreds.
27. The self-purifying ones have surged from the heaven, from the midspace
    onto the back of the earth.

28. Becoming purified in a stream, o Soma drop, smash away all errors,
    away the demonic forces, o you of good resolve.
29. Smashing away demons, Soma, rush ever roaring
    toward highest brilliant tempestuousness.
30. In us, o Soma drop, secure goods—heavenly, earthly,
    all that are choice.

IX.64 (776) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

The hymn begins with an insistent tr̥ca establishing Soma as a bull. What follows is for the most part a conventional treatment of the purification process, with special emphasis on his entry into "the sea" (that is, the purificatory waters, vss. 8, 16, 17, 19, 27). The association with the Sun found in the preceding hymn is also present here, with Soma not merely yoking the Sun's horse, Etaśa, but identified with him (vs. 19) and with the Sun himself in the final words of the hymn (vs. 30; see also vss. 7, 9). Soma's light and brilliance are also mentioned throughout (vss. 1, 8, 13, 15, 28).

1. A bull are you, Soma, a brilliant one—a bull following his bullish commandments, o god.
   As bull, you have established your own foundations.
2. Of you, the bull, bullish is the strength; your wooden (cup) is a bull, your exhilarating drink a bull.
   In truth, o bull, you are really a bull.

3. You, the bull, whinny like a horse. Sur(round) the cows, sur(round) the steeds, o drop;
   open up the doors for wealth for us.

4. They have surged forth—the prize-seeking soma juices—with a yen for cows and for horses,
   with a yen for heroes—the swift clear ones.
5. Being beautified by those who seek truth, being groomed in the two hands,
   they purify themselves in the sheep's fleece.
6. All goods for the pious—heavenly, earthly, and those of the midspace—
   let these soma juices bring in purifying themselves.

7. O you who find [/know] all, of you purifying yourself the surges have surged forth,
   like the rays of the sun.
8. Making a beacon, from heaven you rush toward all forms.
   O Soma, you swell as the sea.
9. Yourself being impelled, you send out your speech, you who purify yourself at your expansion.
   You have roared like the Sun-god.

10. The drop has become purified, the conspicuous dear one, by the thought of the poets.
    Like a charioteer his horse, it has released (its wave),
11. Your wave which, pursuing the gods, has streamed around in the filter,
    sitting on the womb of truth.
12. Rush into our filter, as the exhilarating drink that best pursues the gods,
    o drop, for Indra to drink.

13. For refreshment purify yourself in a stream, being groomed by the inspired ones.
    O drop, with your light come toward the cows.
14. Becoming purified, make wide space and nourishment for the people, o you who long for song,
    when you are released into the milk-mixture, o tawny one.
15. Becoming purified for the pursuit of the gods, drive to your rendezvous with Indra,
    flashing, guided by the prize-seekers.

16. Being impelled forth, the swift drops,
    sped by insightful thought, have surged to the sea.
17. Continually being groomed, the lively drops
    have come at will to the sea, to the womb of truth.
18. Inclined toward us, encompass for us all goods with your strength.
    Protect for us a shelter full of heroes.

19. Etaśa the draft-horse measures out his pace, being yoked by the versifiers,
    when he is deposited in the sea.
20. When the swift one sits on the golden womb of truth,
    he leaves behind the undiscerning.
21. The seekers have cried out to (him); the discerning wish to attain (him).
    The undiscriminating sink down.

22. For Indra with the Maruts, o drop, purify yourself as the most honeyed,
    to sit on the womb of truth.
23. The inspired poets knowing [/finding] speech, the ritual adepts, adorn you;
    the Āyus groom you all over.
24. Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa drink your sap, o poet,
    as do the Maruts, when you purify yourself.

25. You, Soma, while becoming purified, send out speech that is attentive to poetic inspiration
    and brings a thousand presents, o drop.
26. And speech bringing a thousand presents, ready for combat [/bounty], o Soma—
    becoming purified, o drop, bring that hither.
27. Becoming purified, o drop, much invoked by these peoples,
    as dear one, enter the sea.

28. (Provided) with ever-flashing light, with a form that encircles with chant
    are (both) the clear soma drinks and those mixed with cows [=milk].
29. Being impelled, guided by the impellers, the prize-seeker has stridden to the prize—
    sitting (on the womb of truth) like raptor(-birds).
30. Separately [=unmixed], o Soma, and uniting (with milk), as poet of heaven
    purify yourself for well-being and as the sun to be seen.

IX.65 (777) Soma Pavamāna

Bhr̥gu Vāruṇi or Jamadagni Bhārgava
30 verses: gāyatrī, arranged in tr̥cas

Even in this maṇḍala devoted to "self-purifying" Soma, the constant repetition of that epithet and its associated verbal forms ("purify yourself," etc.) in this hymn is remarkable. In particular, the idiom "by purifying yourself bring here . . ." (much more economically expressed in Sanskrit by *ā́ pavasva*) is insistent, along with other demands that Soma bring or convey goods here. Intermingled are verses treating

the familiar details of soma preparation. All in all, the hymn seems flat, uninspired, and repetitive.

The tr̥ca consisting of verses 22–24 breaks the monotony to some degree, with the first two verses listing various places where the soma may be pressed (the meaning of some of these words is disputed and their translation provisional), and only the third returning to the dominant theme of the hymn. The final tr̥ca (vss. 28–30) brings the hymn to a close with a flurry of repetitions of the preverb *ā́* "here, hither," in a list of items we wish to bring to hand as a result of the soma offering.

1. The rosy (fingers) impel the sun; the kindred sisters impel their lord;
   those seeking the great impel the great drop.
2. O self-purifying one, with light after light, as god from among the gods,
   enter all good things.
3. O self-purifying one, by purifying yourself bring here good praise, rain,
   and friendship from the gods,
   continuously for refreshment.

4. Because you are a bull, we, very attentive, invoke you who are brilliant
   with radiance,
   o self-purifying one.
5. By purifying yourself bring here an abundance of heroes, you yourself
   becoming exhilarated, o you of good weapons.
   Come just here, o drop.
6. When you are poured all around with waters, being groomed in the
   two hands,
   you attain to your seat by means of the wooden (vessel).

7. Sing forth to self-purifying Soma, as Vyaśva did—
   to the great one with a thousand eyes—
8. Him whose tawny hue, dripping with honey, they impel (like) a fallow
   bay with the stones,
   the drop for Indra to drink,
9. It's with you—that prize-seeker who has won all the stakes—
   that we choose partnership.

10. As bull purify yourself in a stream, and as exhilarating drink for the
    one accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra],
    making all things your own by your strength.
11. You, o self-purifying one, who look like the sun, the upholder of
    (Indra's?) two arms,
    do I impel—the prize-seeker to the prizes.
12. Conspicuous because of this poetic inspiration, purify yourself as
    tawny one in this very stream.
    Spur on your yokemate to the prizes.

13. By purifying yourself bring great refreshment here for us, o drop visible to all,
    finding the way for us, o Soma.
14. The tubs have cried out, o drop. In streams, with strength,
    enter (them) for Indra's drinking.
15. You, whose exhilarating, sharp sap they milk out with stones—
    purify yourself as smasher of hostility.

16. The king is sped by (words of) wisdom, purifying himself in Manu's presence,
    to drive through the midspace.
17. Convey to us here, o drop, hundredfold thriving of cattle, an abundance of horses,
    and the gift of good fortune, for aid.
18. Bring to us here, o Soma, strength and speed, as if in physical form, for luster,
    when you have been pressed to seek the gods.

19. Rush, o Soma, most brilliant, to the wooden vessels, constantly bellowing,
    sitting like a falcon in your womb.
20. For Indra, for Vāyu, for Varuṇa, for the Maruts, for Viṣṇu
    the water-winning soma rushes.
21. Establishing refreshment for our offspring and for us on all sides, o Soma,
    by purifying yourself bring thousandfold (wealth) here.

22. The soma juices that have been pressed in the distance, those nearby,
    or those yonder in a reed-filled (lake),
23. Those (pressed) in foamy (places) among performers (of rituals), those in the middle of dwelling places,
    or those among the five peoples,
24. By purifying themselves, let them bring here to us rain from heaven and an abundance of heroes—
    the gods, the drops, being pressed.

25. He purifies himself, the delightful tawny one, while being hymned by Jamadagni
    and being impelled onto the hide of the cow.
26. Forth (go) the clear (soma juices), speeding with vigor, being impelled like teams.
    Being brought to readiness, they are groomed in the waters.
27. Those present at the pressings have impelled you for the sake of the divine conclave.
    Purify yourself with this light.

28. Here your skill, which is joy itself, we choose today, here (you as) draft-animal,
 here the much coveted drink,
29. Here the gladdening (drink), here the one worthy to be chosen, here the inspired poet, here the inspirited one,
 here the much coveted drink,
30. Here wealth, here kind attention, here, o strong-willed one, right here on our bodies,
 here the much coveted drink.

IX.66 (778) Soma Pavamāna, except Agni 19–21

One hundred Vaikhānasa poets
30 verses: gāyatrī (except anuṣṭubh 18), arranged in tr̥cas

This hymn sets larger rhetorical goals for itself than the last one and inhabits a less airless rhetorical space. Indeed, the hymn is in part *about* space: the constricted area in which the soma is prepared and the materials employed in the preparation are likened to various cosmic domains and natural phenomena (see, e.g., vss. 2–3, 5–6, 12–13). Soma himself is explicitly or implicitly identified with other deities and natural forces, and they with him: the sun (vss. 18, 22, 27), probably Indra (vs. 26), and especially Agni (vss. 19–21). This last identification is so complete that the Anukramaṇī identifies Agni as the divinity of this tr̥ca—not surprisingly, as it begins (vs. 19) with an address to Agni, who is assigned the archetypal Soma epithet "self-purifying" (vs. 20, with verbal forms in vss. 19 and 21), while also keeping his own characteristic vocabulary (esp. "installed in front" [*puróhita*] vs. 20).

The poet also seeks comradeship with Soma (vss. 1, 4, 14, 18), in addition to the usual good things.

From an Indo-European perspective, the hymn is notable for containing one of three R̥gvedic occurrences of the famous phrase *ákṣiti śrávaḥ* "imperishable fame," cognate with Greek *kléos áphthiton* "idem," and the formula, identified by Adelbert Kuhn in 1853, that launched the field of comparative Indo-European poetics.

1. Purify yourself, you who are common to all the separate peoples, (surging) toward all products of poetic skill,
 a comrade for your comrades, to be reverently invoked.
2. From those two you rule over all, self-purifying one—from the two domains [=Heaven and Earth]
 that stand facing (each other), o Soma.
3. The domains that are yours, Soma, you surround entirely
 according to the ritual sequences, o self-purifying poet.

4. Purify yourself, begetting refreshments, (surging) toward all valuables,
 as a comrade to aid your comrades.
5. Yours are the gleaming rays that spread widely on the back of heaven
 across the filter, Soma, through your domains.
6. Yours are these seven streams that flow forth to your command, Soma.
 For you do the milk-cows run.

7. Drive forth, Soma, in a stream, pressed as exhilarating for Indra,
 establishing for yourself imperishable fame.
8. Together the seven siblings cried out to you, inciting with insightful thoughts
 the inspired poet at the contest of Vivasvant.
9. They groom you together, the unwed ones, on the sheep's *back, in the lively (water),
 when, hoarse-voiced [/creaking], you are anointed [/greased] in the wood(en cup).

10. Of you purifying yourself, o poet and prizewinner, the surges have surged,
 like chargers seeking fame.
11. Toward the cask dripping with honey they have surged onto the sheep's fleece.
 The insightful thoughts have bellowed.
12. Toward the sea have the drops gone, like milk-cows toward home,
 to the womb of truth.

13. For our great joy the waters, the rivers rush forth, o drop,
 when you will clothe yourself with cows.
14. Since we are likely to gain in comradeship with you, with you as our help,
 we long for comradeship, o drop.
15. Purify yourself for the quest for cattle, for the great one of manly eye, o Soma.
 Enter here into the belly of Indra.

16. Great are you, Soma, preeminent, strongest of the strong, o drop.
 Being a battler, you win every time.
17. (You,) who are stronger even than the strong, more a champion even than champions,
 more generous even than those who give much,
18. You, Soma, are the sun; (bring) refreshments here at the winning of the offspring of our own bodies.
 We choose (you) for comradeship; we choose (you) for fellowship.

19. O Agni, you bring (longer) lifespans through your purification; impel hither nourishment and refreshment to us.
 Into the distance thrust misfortune.

20. Agni—a seer, self-purifying, belonging to the five peoples, installed in front—
him we beseech for a great household.
21. Agni, as a good worker, through your purification bring luster and an abundance of heroes for us,
establishing in me wealth and thriving.

22. The self-purifying one rushes across failures toward the lovely praise hymn,
visible to all like the sun.
23. He, being constantly groomed by the Āyus, affording pleasure, is established for pleasure,
the drop, a steed visible afar.
24. The self-purifying one, as the lofty truth, has begotten the gleaming light,
continually smashing (back) the black shades of darkness.

25. Of the self-purifying one, continually smashing (back the darkness), of the tawny one, the glittering (drops) have surged,
lively ones with flickering radiance.
26. The self-purifying one, the best charioteer, proclaimed as most resplendent by the resplendent (Maruts),
gold-glittering, with the Maruts as his flock,
27. The self-purifying one will pervade with his rays, the best winner of prizes,
establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.

28. Being pressed, the drop has flowed forth across the fleecy filter;
being purified, the drop (has flowed) to Indra.
29. This Soma plays on the hide of cows with the stones,
repeatedly invoking Indra to exhilaration.
30. You, self-purifying one, whose heaven-bright milk was brought here from heaven,
with it be gracious to us, for us to live.

IX.67 (779) Soma Pavamāna [or, according to Anukramaṇī, Soma Pavamāna 1–9, 13–22, 28–30; Soma Pavamāna or Pūṣan 10–12; Agni 23, 24; Agni or Savitar 25; Agni or Agni and Savitar 26; Agni or the All Gods 27; Praise of the Student of the Pavamānī Verses 31–32]

Bharadvāja 1–3, Kaśyapa 4–6, Gotama 7–9, Atri 10–12, Viśvāmitra 13–15, Jamadagni 16–18, Vasiṣṭha 19–21, Pavitra Āṅgirasa or Vasiṣṭha or both 22–32
32 verses: gāyatrī, except dvipadā gāyatrī 16–18, anuṣṭubh 27, 31–32, puraüṣṇih 30, arranged in tṛcas through verse 21.

This final hymn of the IXth Maṇḍala gāyatrī collection is, according to the Anukramaṇī, the product of at least seven different poets, most of them founding poets of the Family Books of the R̥gveda and all eponymous ancestors of the most prominent gotras of later times—each responsible for a single tr̥ca, with the last eleven verses assigned either to yet another poet or to Vasiṣṭha, the poet of the immediately preceding tr̥ca. It has been convincingly argued by Proferes (2007: 10) that this structure shows that the separate lineage rites were already being collected into a single pan-Ārya ritual during the R̥gvedic period and that this composite hymn was a conscious attempt to bring the various clans under one ritual umbrella. He argues that the final two verses (31–32) were added by the redactors or compilers and celebrate this ecumenical project, by declaring that the assemblage is greater and more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Certainly its parts are quite various. The first twenty-one verses, attributed to the various clan-poets, are for the most part conventional Soma Pavamāna verses, and the tr̥cas for the most part exhibit some internal cohesion. The single unconventional tr̥ca consists of verses 10–12, attributed to Atri, in which the god Pūṣan dominates. Pūṣan otherwise scarcely appears in the IXth Maṇḍala, has little or no connection with soma elsewhere (gruel is his favored meal), and barely appears in the Atri Maṇḍala (V) except in lists of other gods. The reason for his intrusion here is unclear.

Verses 22–27 form a self-contained purificatory spell, calling on various gods, including Soma, Agni, and Savitar, in addition to groups of gods, to purify us with their own characteristic instruments. There follow two verses (28–29) that return to the soma theme, and then the strangest verse of all (30). The interpretation of this verse is much disputed, but it appears to refer to the myth of the disappearance of the ritual Agni and urges Soma to bring him back, along with a, or the, rat, which may be a reference to the god Rudra, whose animal victim in later ritual is a rat. But this is only a guess.

The last two supplementary verses (31–32) were discussed above.

1. You, Soma, are supporting, invigorating, strongest at the ceremony.
   Purify yourself, readying wealth.
2. You, bringing exhilaration to superior men when pressed, most
      exhilarating when you have run,
   are patron to Indra, with your stalk.
3. You, having been pressed by stones—rush, roaring constantly,
   toward highest brilliant tempestuous force.

4. The drop, being impelled, rushes across the sheep's fleece;
   the tawny one has roared for the prize.
5. O drop, you rush through the fleece, through to acclamations, through to
      gifts of good fortune,
   through to prizes consisting of cows, o Soma.
6. Bring here to us, o drop, wealth in cattle and horses—
   a hundredfold, a thousandfold, o soma.

7. The self-purifying drops, swift across the filter,
have reached Indra on their journeys.
8. The prominent somian sap, the primordial drop
purifies itself for Indra—a lively one for a lively one [/Āyu].
9. The rosy (fingers) impel the sun; to the self-purifying one, dripping with honey,
they cry out in unison with a song.

10. Pūṣan whose horses are goats is our helper on every journey.
– He will give us a share in maidens.
11. This Soma here purifies himself, honeyed like ghee, for the one with braided hair [=Pūṣan].
– He will give us a share in maidens.
12. This pressed soma here purifies himself, gleaming like ghee, for you, glowing one.
– He will give us a share in maidens.

13. As child of the speech of the poets, o Soma, purify yourself in a stream.
You are the one among the gods who establishes treasure.
14. He runs into the tubs; the falcon plunges through the armor
toward the cups, roaring constantly.
15. Your sap, Soma, when pressed, has surged forth and around into the tub.
Like a falcon launched in flight, it rushes.

16. Purify yourself, Soma, causing exhilaration, most honeyed for Indra.
17. They have been released to pursue the gods, like chariots seeking the prize.
18. The clear pressed soma-juices, most invigorating, have surged to Vāyu.

19. Pounded by the stone, bepraised, you go to the filter, o Soma,
establishing for the praiser an abundance of heroes.
20. This one, pounded, bepraised, plunges across the filter,
the sheep's fleece, as demon-smasher.
21. What peril nearby and what at a little distance finds me here—
o self-purifying one, smash that away.

22. The one who purifies himself through our filter today, the limitless one
who is the purifier, let him purify us.
23. The filter that is stretched out here within your flame, o Agni,
and the sacred formulation—with that purify us.
24. Your filter of flames, Agni—with that purify us;
with the impulsions of sacred formulations purify us.
25. With both, god Savitar, with the filter and with your impulsion
purify me all about.

26. With the three purify us—you, god Savitar, with your greatest (impulsions), you, Soma, through your greatest domains,
 and you, Agni, with your skills.
27. Let the godly folk purify me; let the Vasus purify me with insight.
 O All Gods, purify me; o Jātavedas, purify me.

28. Swell forth, flow forth, Soma, with all your shoots
 as highest oblation for the gods.
29. Close to the dear youth who always excites wonder, the one growing strong through the poured offering,
 have we come, bearing homage.

30. The axe [=flame] of the one not to be stilled [=Agni] (has) disappeared.
 By purifying yourself bring it here, o god Soma,
 so also the rat [=Rudra?], o god Soma.

31. Whoever studies the "Self-Purifying" (verses), the sap assembled by the seers,
 that one eats the whole purified (sap), sweetened by Mātariśvan.
32. Whoever studies the "Self-Purifying" (verses), the sap assembled by the seers,
 for him Sarasvatī milks out milk, fresh butter, honey, and water.

Jagatī Hymns: 68–86

IX.68 (780) Soma Pavamāna

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

The first of the Soma hymns in jagatī meter (IX.68–86), this poem well demonstrates the increased possibilities for verbal and conceptual richness that the longer meter affords, in contrast to the concision and constriction of gāyatrī. The hymn has an omphalos structure: since verse 10 is a summary verse and in a different meter (triṣṭubh), verse 5 is the middle verse and encodes the esoteric knowledge that is the hymn's message. This verse is framed by a number of verbal and semantic responsions (though not as tightly arranged as in some omphalos hymns): for instance, the fingers of verses 4 and 7, as well as the same phrase "held by men" in both verses; the forms of the root *vid* "find, discover" in verses 3 and 6 (and 9).

More important is the conceptual architecture: the hymn leads up to the omphalos and away from it, returning to its conceptual starting point. It begins with the

ritual soma and the familiar details of its preparation (vss. 1–2): the journey across the filter and the mixing with milk, complete with details about the actual filtering process, as the juice leaves its detritus in the filter. But toward the end of verse 2, the journey gains a larger resonance, however vague: soma circles "the wide expanse," an area that sounds more ample than a mere sheep's fleece. In verses 3 and 4 the journey has turned cosmic: heaven and earth are now the domain for Soma's travel and for his fecundating activity, and in our view the contrast between Soma's swelling footprint in 4b and his head in 4d expresses his cosmic reach, from his feet on earth, swelling with rain, to his distant head in heaven.

Verse 5, the omphalos, provides an explanation, albeit a mystical one, for the difference between the ritual soma of the first two verses and the cosmic one of verses 3–4. He really had two births, one in secret even beyond the two worlds and one made evident to all. And as a consequence there are actually two Somas, a fact first recognized by Heaven and Earth. (Such is our reading of this verse, which has generally been interpreted quite differently: one influential opinion identifies the Aśvins as the twins mentioned, a solution of desperation in our opinion.)

The second form of Soma, the physical and visible one, is brought to earth in verse 6, and the poets and ritualists transform him into the ritual soma now familiar to us. The remaining verses before the summary (7–9) bring us back to the current ritual soma with which we began, but with a clearer awareness of the powers his dual nature has bestowed on him. For example, in verse 1 the drops are simply "provided with speech," but in verses 8–9 Soma "rouses speech" all the way to heaven. Similarly, in verse 2 he simply "circles around" the wide expanse, whereas in 9d, the last pāda of the hymn proper, he "finds" wide space, a feat much desired and much celebrated by the Vedic Āryas.

1. Forth toward the god have the honeyed drops flowed, like milk-cows.
   Sitting on the ritual grass, provided with speech, with (full) udders, they have assumed as their swirling raiment the ruddy (cows' milk).
2. Bellowing continually he has cried out to the (cows) in front; loosening his shoots, the tawny one becomes sweet.
   Across the filter, circling around the broad expanse, the god will lay down his stems at will.
3. The exhilarating drink, which measured across the converging twin sisters [=Heaven and Earth], swelled those two imperishable ones, grown strong simultaneously, with imperishable milk.
   Continually rediscovering the two great, unbounded world-halves, advancing upon imperishable (space), he assumed his full dimension.
4. Wandering between the two mothers [=Heaven and Earth], stirring up the waters, the wise one swells his own footprint by his independent power.
   The plant is ornamented with grain when he is held by men; while he joins with his female kin [=fingers], he guards his own head.

5. Along with skill and mind the poet is born; the embryo of truth was deposited beyond the twins [=Heaven and Earth].
Those two were the first to recognize that there were two youths: the (one) birth deposited in secret and the other held aloft.
6. The inspired thinkers discovered the form of the gladdening one, when the falcon brought the stalk from out of the distance.
They groomed him in the rivers, the eager well-grown plant, circling around, worthy of verses.
7. The ten maidens [=fingers] groom you when you are pressed, Soma, when you are impelled by the seers with thoughts and insights
and with invocations of the gods through the sheep's fleeces. Held by men, you will break out the prize to be won.
8. The inspired thoughts, the rhythms have roared to Soma, the branchy one, circling forth, keeping good company,
who, honeyed, in a stream, in a wave from heaven, rouses speech—the immortal one who conquers wealth.
9. This is the one who rouses (speech) to the whole realm of heaven. Soma, being purified, sits in the tubs.
He is groomed with waters, with cows, when he has been pressed by stones. Being purified, the drop finds dear wide space.
10. In just this way, o Soma, purify yourself, being poured all around, establishing for us vigor most bright.
We would invoke Heaven and Earth, the two without hatred. O gods, establish wealth rich in heroes for us.

IX.69 (781) Soma Pavamāna

Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Attributed to the same poet as the author of the famous Indra hymn I.32 (and indeed I.31–35, as well as IX.4), this hymn is dense with ever-shifting imagery, expressed in many forms: similes, metaphors, identifications. Sometimes several referents are simultaneously possible, as in verse 1, where both "thought" and "soma" could be the subject of the middle part of the verse. This verbal richness is quite appropriate, since at least the first two verses concern the poetic impulse; note the nice description of the tongue as "the gladdening goad" in 2b.

The middle verses (3–7) treat Soma's journey across the filter to meet and mix with the cows/milk. This mixture is described in increasingly elaborate images of clothing in verses 4–5, ending with the cosmos as his garment (5cd). The journey is completed in the first half of verse 7, and the hymn comes to a more conventional ending with prayers for goods and aid.

1. Like an arrow on a bow, my thought is aimed. It is released like a calf to the udder of its mother.
   Like (a cow) with a broad stream, it gives milk as it comes here in the lead. Under the commandments of this one [=Soma the god], the soma (juice) is dispatched.
2. And while my thought is being engorged, the honey is poured. The gladdening goad [=tongue] bestirs itself within the mouth.
   The self-purifying one is a thundering, like (the thundering) of beaters. The honeyed drop rushes round the fleece.
3. Seeking his wives, he purifies himself all around in the fleece and upon the hide. The granddaughter of Aditi loosens (her garment [=shoots of the soma plant]) for him who goes to truth.
   The tawny one [/fallow bay], held fast, has whinnied—the sacrificial exhilarating drink. Sharpening his own manly powers, like a buffalo, he beautifies himself.
4. The bull bellows, and the milk-cows go in response. The goddesses go to their rendezvous with the god.
   He has stridden beyond the silvery sheep's fleece. Soma has wrapped himself in (milk) as if in a freshly washed cloak.
5. Being arrayed, the immortal tawny one has wrapped himself with an unworn, gleaming garment.
   With his might he has made the back of heaven for his raiment and an underlayer made of cloud in the two cups.
6. Like the rays of the sun that set sleepers in motion, the exhilarating (soma juices) arise all at once from sleep.
   The swift surges (surge) around the stretched string [=filter]. But without Indra he [=Soma] does not purify any domain of his.
7. As at the forward plunge of a river toward the deep, the swift exhilarating drinks, roused by bulls, have achieved their course.
   Weal (be) for our two-footed and our four-footed at their homecoming. Let prizes and peoples stand by us, Soma.
8. By purifying yourself bring (wealth) in goods and gold, in horses, cows, and barley, and an abundance of good heroes,
   for you (soma-juices), o Soma, are my fathers, the heads of heaven, set forth as creators of vitality for me.
9. These self-purifying soma juices have gone forth to Indra, like chariots to a win.
   Pressed, the tawny ones go beyond the ovine filter, having left behind their cover, to the rain.
10. O drop, purify yourself for lofty Indra, since you are very merciful, beyond reproach, caring for the stranger.
    Bring gleaming goods to the singer. O Heaven and Earth, together with the gods—further us.

IX.70 (782) Soma Pavamāna

Reṇu Viśvāmitra
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

An intricate and difficult hymn, some of whose puzzles remain unsolved. The theme of the hymn is the difference between, and ultimate unity of, heavenly Soma and earthly, ritual Soma—a theme that was also the subject of nearby IX.68. The disjunction is announced in the first verse, where the "real" milk-mixture is produced in heaven, and the worlds are Soma's garment. In verse 2, by contrast, it seems that the earthly Soma is seeking a share of his heavenly counterpart by performing cosmic deeds through ritual means. A rapprochement is effected in verse 3, where Soma's beacons (*kétu*) go to and work upon both men and gods, and as a consequence they accept him as their king; on the basis of other passages in which this term is found, the beacons appear to be both his cosmic sunlike rays and the glinting streams of ritual soma as they circle in the filter. The intermediary role of Soma between gods and men and Heaven and Earth remains the subject of the following verses (4–6), though not all is clear, especially the first half of verse 4 and the last half of verse 6. The last four verses (7–10) return us to the ritual Soma and his ultimate goal, the body of Indra, but the cosmic associations he acquired in the earlier parts of the hymn make him nourishment fit for the gods.

1. Three times seven milk-cows have milked out for him the real milk-mixture in the foremost distant heaven.
   He made the four other dear worlds to be his raiment, when he grew strong through the truths [=hymns].
2. Seeking a share of the dear immortal one, through his poetic skill he has loosened both, Heaven (and Earth), from each other.
   He lavishly wraps himself in the glinting-sharp waters when, by the god's [=Soma's] fame, they [=waters] know his seat.
3. Let those immortal undeceivable beacons of his suffuse both races [=gods and men],
   the beacons by which both manly and godly (powers) become purified.
   Just because of that have the zealous ones accepted him as their king.
4. He, being groomed by the ten who work well [=fingers], (goes) forth to bellow forth amid the midmost mothers [=waters?].
   Protecting the commandments of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma], having his sight on men, he surveys both clans [=gods and men].
5. Constantly being groomed, propelled between the two worlds-halves, he is roused to give suck to Indra.
   With his blustering the bull thrusts away evil thoughts, always setting his sights, like a sharpshooter, on rich spoils.

6. The ruddy one, becoming visible, goes (to Heaven and Earth) as if to his two mothers, roaring again and again, like the clamor of the Maruts.
   Recognizing the first truth, which is the realm of solar splendor, he of strong will has chosen it for his glorification.
7. The fearsome bull bellows forcefully, sharpening his golden horns, wide-gazing.
   Soma sits down upon his well-made womb. His skin comes to be made of cattle; his garment of sheep.
8. Gleaming, purifying his spotless body, the tawny one has run down onto the sheep's back,
   pleasing to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Vāyu. The honey is made threefold by those who make it well.
9. Purify yourself as bull, Soma, to pursue the gods. Enter the heart of Indra, which is the receptacle of Soma.
   Ahead of oppression, carry us across difficulties, for he who knows the territory tells the directions to the one who asks.
10. Like a team spurred on, rush to the prize. O drop, purify yourself into the belly of Indra.
   Carry us across (difficulties) as if across a river with a boat, since you know how. Like a battling champion, rescue us from insult.

IX.71 (783) Soma Pavamāna

R̥ṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 9

The subject of this hymn is, as so often, Soma's journey across the filter to take his seat as ritual drink after the various stages of preparation. The journey is presented as a straightforward trajectory on the one hand, with his arrival among the gods and his union with the praise hymn the last step, in verse 8. But the hymn is also structured by a number of responsions between the earlier and the later verses; note especially 2b and 8a, with the almost identical phrases "the color that is his" and "this is his color." In this particular example the forward movement of the journey and the architectonic structure of responsions complement each other, for in verse 2 Soma sheds his original form and color and in verse 8 he gains new ones.

1. The tempestuous one is sent surging, along with the gift-cow, to take his seat here. Vigilant, he pursues deceits and protects from the demon.
   The tawny one makes himself a headdress, cloud and milk for an underlayer in the two cups, and the sacred formulation for his raiment.

2. Like a smiter of peoples, explosive he goes forth, roaring again and again. He spills down the lordly color that is his.
   He abandons his covering, and he goes to his rendezvous with his father. He makes what floats nearby [=milk] in its full measure into his fresh garment.
3. Pressed by the stones, he purifies himself between the two hands. With his cloud he acts the bull [/rains]; he trembles (in poetic inspiration) with his thought.
   He rejoices in, unites with, achieves success through the song. He washes himself in the waters. He sacrifices for himself in his fullness.
4. All around they sprinkle the heaven-ruling (son) of strength, of honey, grown strong upon the mountain, the conqueror of the secure house,
   in whom, on whose head, the cows prepare the foremost (milk) in their udder in broad (streams) for him who eats the good oblation [=Indra].
5. The ten sisters on the two hands have assembled him like a chariot, here in the lap of Aditi.
   As he goes, he extends toward the secret track of the cow which the thoughtful have produced for him.
6. Like a falcon to its womb [=nest], the god hastens to sit upon the golden seat made by insight.
   They let the dear one spill onto the ritual grass with a song. Like a horse (its stall), the one worthy of the sacrifice approaches the gods.
7. Far away is the ruddy poet of heaven, all adorned. The three-backed bull has bellowed to the cows.
   The marshal who has a thousand ways and means [=Soma] radiates, like the hoarse-voiced singer [=Agni], across the many dawns as they go away.
8. He makes for himself a glittering form—that is his color. When he has lain down in the clash (of the pressing stones), he wards off errors.
   Winning the waters, he drives by his own will to the divine folk. He joins with the lovely praise hymn, with what is tipped with cows.
9. Like a bull going around the herds, he has bellowed as he circles. He has put on the glitterings of the sun.
   The heavenly eagle looks down upon the earth. Soma surveys the creatures in accord with his purpose.

IX.72 (784) Soma Pavamāna

Harimanta Āṅgirasa
9 verses: jagatī

The role of humans in both the physical and the verbal preparation of Soma is emphasized in this hymn. The first verse sets this tone, with the anonymous priestly

subjects of "they groom" of pāda a and the anonymous praisers who impel the soma in the second half, a division of labor found as well in verse 2; see also verses 4–6, 8. The exact responsion of the last parts of 4d and 5b seem to mark an omphalos, but there is little other evidence for such a structure.

The hymn contains one major problem: the hapax *vinaṃgr̥sá* in 3c. The phraseology in this pāda is strongly suggestive of erotic slang, but unfortunately the word has so far defeated all attempts to decode it. It is worth noting, however, that it is a partial anagram of the patronymic of the poet Harimanta Āṅgirasa, and he may be punning on his name in this playful, erotic context.

1. They groom the tawny one [/fallow bay]; like a chestnut he is yoked.
   Soma is anointed with milk-cows in the tub.
   When he raises his voice, the circle of friends of the one praised by
   many—however many they are—speed him on with their thought.
2. The many inspired thinkers speak all at once, when they have milked the
   soma into the belly of Indra,
   when the men of skilled hands groom him, the desirable honey, with the
   ten belonging to the same nest [=fingers].
3. Not stopping, he goes beyond (the filter) toward the cows, across the
   dear bellow of the Daughter of the Sun.
   According to his pleasure, the vinaṃgr̥sa [?] "stuck it" to him. He dwells
   together with the paired, kindred sisters [=fingers].
4. Rinsed by men, pressed by stones, the dear one on the ritual grass, the
   husband of the cows, from of old the drop that follows the ritual
   seasons,
   accompanied by Plenitude, assuring success to the sacrifice of Manu,
   gleaming, with insight he purifies himself for you, Indra.
5. Driven on by the two arms of men, pressed in a stream, following his
   own nature Soma purifies himself for you, Indra.
   He has fulfilled their intentions; he has won completely the thoughts at
   the ceremony. Like a bird sitting in the wood the tawny one has taken
   his seat in the two cups.
6. They milk the thundering, imperishable plant; the industrious inspired
   poets (milk) the poet.
   The cows and the thoughts in uninterrupted array, ever regenerating, go
   together to him in the womb, the seat of truth.
7. On the navel of earth is the buttress of great heaven. In the wave of the
   waters and within the rivers he is sprinkled.
   The mace of Indra, the bull possessing conspicuous goods, the
   invigorating soma purifies himself in a way dear to the heart.
8. Purify yourself all around the earthly realm, as you do your best for the
   man who praises and the man who rinses (you), you very resolute one.
   Don't deal us out of a portion of a good that will touch our
   dwellings: might we clothe ourselves in ample golden wealth.

9. (Bring) here for us, o drop, a hundred shares of horses, a thousand shares of flocks and gold.
   Measure out lofty, rich refreshments. Give study to our praise, self-purifying one.

IX.73 (785) Soma Pavamāna

Pavitra Āṅgirasa
9 verses: jagatī

A complex and enigmatic hymn, whose difficulties stem primarily from the double system of reference that pervades the hymn. The signature phrase is "they have sounded in unison" (*sám asvaran*, vss. 1, 4, 5, 6); in none of its occurrences is there an overt subject, an omission that is surely deliberate. The verb forms in question, and indeed most of the hymn, can be interpreted as referring either to the soma streams as they noisily cross the filter or to the priests/poets who provide the hymns that accompany soma's journey. This double reference is found even in the name of the poet to whom the hymn is attributed: Pavitra ("Filter"): the filter is both the sheep's wool filter that purifies the soma and the poet who creates the ritual speech; the word *pavítra* occurs several times in the hymn (vss. 3, 7, 8, 9, and implicitly 4). The "solution" to the central riddle of the hymn, this dual reference, is suggested in the first half of verse 7 and definitely expressed in the final verse (9), where "the thread of truth" (*ṛtásya tántuḥ*) is stretched both on the filter and on the tongue-tip. The thread may be both the track of the soma across the filter and the continuous line of speech. The second half of the verse emphasizes the importance of united action to attain it, and the necessity of always advancing.

Another thematic strain is the deployment of the power of this unified sound against enemies and hostile forces (see esp. vss. 5, 6, 8), a power associated with Varuṇa and his *māyā́* ("magic power, artifice," vss. 5 and 9), with whom Soma is identified, first in verse 3. Varuṇa is of course the protector of commandments (*vratá*, vss. 3, 5, 8) and is associated with truth/true speech (*ṛtá*, vss. 1, 6, 8, 9), words prominent in the hymn. Thus, Soma, as the embodiment of Varuṇa, and the poets who assist him can marshal Varuṇa's weapon, "true speech," against forces that deny or attempt to thwart it.

Many individual puzzles remain, but the overall structure and purpose of the hymn are clear.

1. In the jaw (of the pressing stones) while the droplet was blowing its blast, they sounded in unison. The ties of lineage have joined together in the womb of truth.
   The lord [=Soma] has made his three heads to be seized. The boats of the trusty one [=Soma] have brought the good (ritual) performer across to the other shore.

2. Altogether joined together, the buffaloes have been propelled [/have propelled (him)]. The seekers have set (him/speech) atremble in the swell of the river.
   Giving birth to the chant with the streams of honey, they have made Indra's own dear body grow strong.
3. Provided with the filter, they take their seats around speech. Their ancient father guards his commandment.
   As great Varuṇa, (Soma) has hidden himself in the sea. Only the insightful have been able to take hold of his supports.
4. Down in that (filter) of a thousand streams, they have sounded in unison—as have the honey-tongued, inexhaustible (streams) in the vault of heaven.
   His fervent spies do not blink: at every step there are snares that bind.
5. Those who sounded in unison from the father and the mother [=Heaven and Earth], blazing with their verse, burning up those who follow no commandment,
   they blow away by magic power the black skin hated by Indra, from earth and from heaven—
6. Those who sounded in unison from their ancient edifice, those with a signaling call for their reins, counselors of the wild one [=Soma].
   The blind and deaf have retreated: evildoers do not traverse the path of truth.
7. Here in the wide-stretched filter of a thousand streams the poets of inspired thought purify their speech.
   The lively Rudras [=Maruts] without deceit are their spies, well directed, lovely to see, with their eyes on men.
8. The herdsman of truth is not to be tricked: his will is strong. He has set three filters within his heart.
   Knowing, he looks upon all living creatures. He jabs the disgusting deniers of commandments down into the pit.
9. The thread of truth is stretched widely, here on the filter and on the tip of the tongue, through the magic power of Varuṇa.
   Only the insightful, seeking to reach it together, have attained it. The one who does not advance will fall down into the pit here.

IX.74 (786) Soma Pavamāna

Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8

This hymn is attributed to Kakṣīvant, the skilled and crafty poet of I.116–126, who names himself in verse 8. Although it is not as intricate as some of his Ist Maṇḍala productions, it invites the same sort of double readings as the previous

hymn (IX.73) and achieves this ambiguity by the same means, the suppression of overt referential subjects and objects. It is notable that the word *sóma* appears only twice (and only toward the end, vss. 7 and 9) and derivatives of the root *pū* "purify" only in the final verse.

The primary doubled reference arises from the identification of soma with rain. Particularly in the central verses 4–6 the entities and actions described can apply to either or both; for example, the men "pissing down" the unnamed substance in 4d may either be the Maruts producing rain or the priests producing soma. Toward the end the discourse becomes more clearly somian, and these are the verses in which the words "soma" and "self-purifying" appear.

1. Like a new-born (calf), he has roared down into the wood(en vessel).
   When the ruddy racehorse strives to win the sun,
   he keeps company with the milk-strong semen of heaven. We implore
   him for extensive protection through his benevolence.
2. The (soma) plant, the prop and buttress of heaven, which, when well
   extended and fully filled, encompasses in every direction,
   that (plant) will offer sacrifice to these two great world-halves when they
   turn hither. The poet unites the united pair and the refreshing drinks.
3. A great delight is the well-prepared somian honey, and wide is the
   pasture-land of Aditi for him who goes to truth,
   who, as a dawn-red bull, is master of the rain from here, who is the
   leader of the waters, ageless and worthy of verses.
4. The embodied cloud is milked of ghee and milk. The navel of truth, the
   immortal (drink) is born.
   United, possessed of good drops, they please him. The swollen men piss
   down the one propelled.
5. The plant, keeping company with the wave, has roared. For Manu it
   swells the skin that seeks out the gods.
   It deposits the embryo in the lap of Aditi, the one by which we will
   acquire both progeny and prosperity.
6. Let there be inexhaustible (streams) down in the (filter) of a thousand
   streams, and in the third realm (streams) bringing offspring.
   The four hidden (streams), bursting down from heaven, dripping with
   ghee, carry the oblation, the immortal (drink).
7. He makes himself a white form when he is striving to win. Soma,
   benefactor and lord, knows the world.
   He keeps company with insight and (ritual) labor—that is the course
   (that leads) to him. He will split open the water-filled cask of heaven.
8. And the racehorse, having won, has stridden to the gleaming white tub
   anointed with cows, at the finish line.
   Those serving the gods propel him with their mind. (Let there be a
   hundred) cows for Kakṣīvant of a hundred winters.

9. Your juice, when you have been infused with the waters, runs through the sheep's fleece, o self-purifying one.
   Being groomed by the poets, become sweet for Indra to drink, o most exhilarating self-purifying one.

IX.75 (787) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

Soma's deep, almost reflexive, involvement in verbal products and production is the subject of the first two verses of the hymn. He strengthens himself on his own names in verse 1, and in verse 2 is both the physical (tongue, speaker) and conceptual (father) source of truth and insight. In the second half of verse 2, in the sort of paradox much beloved by R̥gvedic seers, he not only knows the hidden names but as son bestows them on his parents.

The remaining three verses are more conventionally concerned with the preparation of the ritual soma, though his connection with cosmic entities remains clear, especially in verse 4.

This hymn and the four following (IX.75–70) are attributed to the same poet as the gāyatrī hymns IX.47–49.

1. Delighted, he purifies himself, (aiming) toward his own dear names, upon which the youthfully exuberant one grows strong.
   The lofty one, wide gazing, has mounted upon the chariot of the lofty sun that faces in many directions.
2. As the tongue of truth, he purifies himself as his own dear honey—he, the speaker and father of this insight, who cannot be deceived.
   The son sets a secret name on his two parents and a third in the luminous realm of heaven.
3. Flashing, he has roared down toward the tubs, being guided by men into the golden bucket.
   Those who produce the milk of truth have bellowed to him. Triple-backed, he rules [/shines] afar over the dawns.
4. Pressed with stones, delighted by our thoughts, making the two world-halves, his mothers, to shine forth, the blazing one
   races through the woolen hairs all at once, as a stream of honey swelling day after day.
5. Run forth all around, Soma, for our well-being. As you are being purified by men, dress yourself in the milk-mixture.
   With those exhilarating drinks of yours, luxuriant and expansive, stimulate Indra to give us bounty.

IX.76 (788) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

This portrait of Soma militant resembles the martial spirit of another of Kavi Bhārgava's hymns, IX.47. The dense series of combative images also track Soma's journey through the purificatory procedure, and his warlike power is to be harnessed for our own ends in the final verse (5). But Soma is not merely a warrior; he is also a master of verbal art, who triumphs in poetic competitions (vs. 4). A short but very satisfying poem.

1. The supporter of heaven purifies himself, the sap that gets results, the skill of the gods to be celebrated by men.
   The tawny one sent surging, like a charger by warriors, deploys his full dimensions in the rivers at will.
2. Like a champion, he takes his weapons in his hands, a chariot-rider striving to win the sun in the cattle raids.
   Rousing Indra's tempestuous force, the drop propelled by the industrious ones [=fingers] is anointed [/driven] by those of inspired thought.
3. O Soma, purifying yourself in a wave, displaying your power, enter the belly of Indra.
   Swell the two worlds for us, as lightning does the rain clouds. As if according to our vision, mete out prizes to us over and over.
4. He purifies himself, the king of all who see the sun. Vanquishing the seers, he has made the vision of truth bellow.
   He who is groomed by the lance [=ray] of the sun is the father of thoughts, one whose poetic skill is entirely unattainable.
5. Like a bull around the herds, you charge around the cask, a bull roaring again and again in the lap of the waters.
   You purify yourself to be most invigorating for Indra, so that we who have your help will conquer in the clash.

IX.77 (789) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

In addition to familiar tropes of soma-preparation (e.g., vss. 1, 3, 4), the hymn briefly treats the famous myth in which a falcon steals soma from heaven (vs. 2), with one of the few R̥gvedic mentions of the heavenly archer Kr̥śānu, who attempted retaliation. As noted, verse 4 for the most part is a standard soma verse, but pāda c skates fleetingly and unemphatically over an apparent paradox, with a

male Soma conceiving himself as his own embryo. In the final verse Soma is compared to Varuṇa, because of his control over truth and deceit, and to Mitra, in his role as mediator among communities.

1. This honeyed one has cried out in the bucket, the mace of Indra, more wondrous than any wonder.
   The good milkers of truth, dripping with ghee, rush bellowing to him, like milk-cows with their milk.
2. The primordial one purifies himself—he whom the falcon, propelled across the airy realm, stole from heaven.
   Quivering, with a mind fearing Kr̥śānu the archer, it [=falcon] binds on the honey.
3. Let these drops, those ahead and those behind, run to a great prize of cows for us—
   those drops worth looking at, cherished like fertile cows, which take pleasure in every sacred formulation, every oblation.
4. This one here, knowing how, will win against those who seek to win—the drop praised by many with fully focused mind,
   who has conceived the embryo in the seat of the powerful one and rushes to the wide-open pen of cows.
5. The active, effective sap of heaven purifies himself as great Varuṇa, not to be deceived by one who goes astray.
   The one worthy of the sacrifice has been pressed as Mitra in the (ritual) enclosures [/communities], constantly whinnying like a charger acting the bull in the herd.

IX.78 (790) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

A fairly straightforward hymn. The first three verses treat the preparation of the soma: after being swollen with water it is sent forth into the filter, which captures the plant detritus, on its way to the milk mixture (vs. 1); it goes across the filter and into the cup (vs. 2); and it is mixed with waters, here unusually personified as the nymph-like females, the Apsarases (vs. 3). The last two verses list the benefits that will accrue to us when the gods drink the soma.

1. The king, begetting speech, has flowed forth; clothing himself in the waters, he seeks to attain to the cows.
   The sheep grasps his defilement, (the stems) attached to his body. Cleansed, he travels to his rendezvous with the gods.

2. For Indra, o Soma, you are poured in circles by the men. As a wave drawing the gaze of men, as poet, you are driven to the wood [/anointed in the wood],
   for there are many courses for you to travel and a thousand fallow bay horses sitting in the cups.
3. The Apsarases belonging to the sea, sitting within, have streamed toward Soma of inspired thought.
   They spur him on, the conqueror of the secure house; they beg the imperishable self-purifying one for his grace.
4. Winning cows for us, winning chariots and gold, winning the sun and the waters, winning thousands, Soma purifies himself,
   whom the gods have made their exhilarating draught for drinking, the sweetest ruddy drop, who is joy itself.
5. O Soma, purifying yourself, you rush, seeking us, while making these treasures real.
   Smash the rival nearby and the one who is in the distance; make wide pasturage and fearlessness for us.

IX.79 (791) Soma Pavamāna

Kavi Bhārgava
5 verses: jagatī

The combative spirit of this hymn is reminiscent of that in other hymns attributed to Kavi Bhārgava, especially IX.47 and IX.76. The hymn is especially interesting because of the light it throws on social divisions in the R̥gvedic period. The word *arí* (vss. 1, 3), here translated "stranger" following Thieme (1938), is a much-discussed and much-contested one, underlying as it does derivatives such as *ā́rya* "Ārya." We are of the opinion that an *arí* is a member of the larger Ārya society, but not of one's immediate community. He is thus a stranger, but one with whom one in principle shares social values and to whom one owes certain reciprocal duties, such as hospitality. But as a stranger he may also pose a threat to the smaller community one belongs to, if he exhibits hostility rather than a communal spirit. The scenario sketched in this hymn involves the latter type of *arí*, whose hostility menaces the success of our sacrifice (vs. 1). Verse 3 is quite explicit about the affinity of the *arí*: he is "one of our own," while a person who does not belong to the larger Ārya society is called a "wolf," an outlaw, when his actions threaten us. The poet calls on Soma to destroy both types of enemies.

Verse 4 provides a brief interlude, outlining the cosmic dimensions of Soma—from heaven to earth, where his "fingers," the shoots of the plant, grow—and a few details of the preparation, vividly rendered. This verse cleverly incorporates four different body parts (navel, fingers, skin, and hands) each belonging to a different

entity. The final verse summarizes the process of pressing and calls once more for Soma to display his feistiness on our behalf.

1. Without impulsion let our tawny drops run, forth to those dwelling in lofty heaven, when they are pressed.
   If hostilities will reach our refreshments, those of the stranger will go to destruction. Our insightful thoughts will prevail.
2. Let our drops run forth, those arousing exhilaration, or (those) with which we speed the chargers to the stakes,
   across the crookedness of any mortal. May we always bear away the stakes.
3. Now, in the case of the hostility of one of our own, (we proclaim:) "he, indeed, is a stranger!" And, in the case of the hostility belonging to the other (side), (we proclaim:) "he, indeed, is a wolf!"
   As if in a desert, thirst should strike them. O self-purifying Soma, smite those of evil intent.
4. It was in heaven, in its navel to which your highest (form) was bound; your "fingers" have grown on the back of the earth.
   The stones gnaw you on the skin of the cow. Those of inspired thought milk you in the waters with their hands.
5. In just this way, o drop, do those foremost ones, excelling in splendor, express your sap of good essence and good ornament.
   Self-purifying one, you will undermine every scorn(er). Let your tempestuous spirit, your dear exhilaration become manifest.

IX.80 (792) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī

On the one hand, this hymn is somewhat static, stuck at the same stage of soma's preparation, as the almost exact responsion of the last two verses (4–5) emphasizes. On the other hand, Soma's relationship with the gods, especially Indra, a relationship that figures in every verse, enlarges the conceptual frame of the hymn and keeps it from seeming airless.

1. It purifies itself—the stream of Soma, who has the gaze of men. With truth he summons the gods from heaven.
   With the roar of Bṛhaspati he has flashed forth. Like seas they [=the waters?] envelop the pressings.
2. You, o prizewinner, toward whom the cows have bellowed—brilliant, you mount the metal-hammered womb [=cup].
   Lengthening the lifetime of the bounteous ones and their great fame, o Soma, for Indra you purify yourself as bullish exhilaration.

3. The most exhilarating one purifies himself in the cheek of Indra, the one of good omen clothing himself in nourishment [=milk], for fame.
   He spreads himself out facing toward all creatures. Playful, the tawny bullish steed flows.
4. You, most honeyed, do the men milk for the gods; you of a thousand streams do the ten fingers milk.
   O Soma, roused by men, pressed by stones, by purifying yourself bring all the gods here, you winner of thousands.
5. You, honeyed, do those having hands milk with stones; you the bull do the ten fingers milk in the waters.
   Exhilarating Indra and the divine race, o Soma, purifying yourself, you rush like the wave of a river.

IX.81 (793) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

Attributed to the same poet as the preceding hymn (IX.80), this hymn concerns itself even more strongly with Soma's connection with the gods, devoting the final two verses of a five-verse hymn to a litany of gods invited to the soma sacrifice. The preceding verse contains two occurrences of the word *vásu* "good (one)," which is also the name of the poet. Soma's task of mediating between the world of gods and men is treated in verse 2, anticipating the appeal for his help to the poet in verse 3 and the invitation to the gods in verses 4–5.

1. The bedizened waves of self-purifying soma go forth to the belly of Indra,
   when, ladled up with the curds, with the glorious (product) of the cows, the pressings have exhilarated the champion for giving.
2. For soma has flowed to the tubs. Like a steed that pulls (the chariot), the bull has a rapid course,
   and knowing of the double birth of gods (and men), he attains to what is from yonder and what from here.
3. O Soma, purifying yourself, scatter goods for us; o drop, become a bounteous (giver) of great largesse.
   Conferrer of vigor, do your best for the good one [/Vasu] with your kind attention. Do not pour away your property at a distance from us.
4. Let Pūṣan, self-purifying (Soma), Mitra, and Varuṇa come here in fellowship, bringing us lovely presents—
   and Bṛhaspati, the Maruts, Vāyu, the Aśvins, Tvaṣṭar, Savitar, and Sarasvatī, who is easy to guide.

5. Both Heaven and Earth who set all in motion, god Aryaman, Aditi, the Apportioner,
   Bhaga, Praise of Men, broad Midspace—all the gods—enjoy the self-purifying one.

IX.82 (794) Soma Pavamāna

Vasu Bhāradvāja
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

The first two verses of this hymn are conventional treatments of Soma's journey across the filter and his mixing with milk (here called ghee). Verse 3, however, is more cryptically phrased, and the name Soma is not mentioned. He appears as a buffalo with feathers and/or leaves, and his father is Parjanya ("thunder"): the image is of a plant produced by the rains. As often, his home is in the mountains, here identified as the navel of the earth. And the rinsing waters, the milk, and the pressing stones of the ritual preparation appear in the second half of the verse. Verse 4 is notable for its 1st-person singular speaker; the abrupt phrase "Listen: I am speaking to you" is reminiscent of the famous command given by the goddess Speech (Vāc) in X.125.4 "Listen to me, you who are listened to. It's a trustworthy thing I tell you." First-person singular speech is quite rare in Maṇḍala IX. The combination of a riddling middle verse and the poet's announcement of his own speech is reminiscent of omphalos hymns, though there is little other support for such a structure.

1. Soma has been pressed—the ruddy, tawny bull. Wondrous like a king, he has roared to the cows.
   While being purified, he circles around the sheep's fleece, to sit, like a falcon, on his ghee-filled womb.
2. As a poet with ritual expertise, you circle around the great (filter). Groomed like a steed, you rush to the prize.
   Warding off difficulties, o Soma, be merciful. Wearing ghee as your raiment, you drive around.
3. Parjanya is the father of the feathered [/leafy] buffalo. In the navel of the earth, on the mountains he has established his dwelling place.
   The sister waters have also flowed to the cows. He will unite with the stones when the ceremony is undertaken.
4. (Kindly) like a wife to her husband, you, kindly one, are generous of yourself. O embryo of the steadfast (earth?), listen: I am speaking to you:
   amid the choir I shall advance to good living. O Soma, irreproachable, be watchful in the ritual enclosure [/community].
5. Just as for the earlier ones you encompassed the prize as a winner of hundreds, of thousands, not shirking, o drop,
   so purify yourself for renewed good progress. The waters follow your commandment.

IX.83 (795) Soma Pavamāna

Pavitra Āṅgirasa
5 verses: jagatī

A well-known hymn, whose manifold difficulties are also well known. It in many ways resembles the famous Vena hymn, X.123, which also involves a mystical identification between Soma and the sun. The double meanings and enigmas are, as often, fostered by the suppression of overt reference. Crucial verbs lack expressed subjects, and unidentified *asya* "of him/it" substitutes for expressed possession (see 2b, 2c, 3c, 4a). The word *sóma* does not appear in the hymn at all, nor do his common epithets. The hymn has elicited many different and contradictory interpretations, to which we add our own.

Attributed to the same poet as IX.73, this hymn shares with that earlier one the mystical metaphor of the filter (*pavítra*), which is also the name of the poet. Indeed, the words "outstretched" and "filter," construed with each other in the last verse of IX.73 (vs. 9), open this hymn, and the two verses (73.9 and 83.1) both concern the qualities required to attain the filter and what it represents. In this hymn the necessary quality is being cooked, rather than raw; it is somewhat startling to encounter this whiff of Claude Lévi-Strauss very much avant la lettre. In this context "cooked" must refer in the first instance to the ritual preparation of soma. Although this preparation does not involve literal cooking, via application of heat, it clearly turns the raw material extracted from the natural plant into a cultural product, both through physical manipulation and through verbal accompaniment.

But the filter metaphor has a cosmic dimension, as is especially clear in verse 2, where it is compared to the sun with its rays spread across the sky like the tracks of the soma across the filter. The "cooking" of verse 1 provides a neat transition to the "hot one" of verse 2, heat being an obvious characteristic of the sun.

Verse 3 and the first half of verse 4 are quite enigmatic—not surprisingly, given their position in the middle of the hymn. Both the "dappled one" and the "ox" can refer both to the Sun and to Soma, each of whom is also associated with dawn, and the first half of the verse thus continues the Sun/Soma identification of verse 2. The second half of verse 3 appears to contain one of those paradoxes beloved of R̥gvedic bards. In our (very tentative) interpretation, the forefathers are the ancestral poet-sacrificers or their divine prototypes. They both "set" the embryo of Soma/Sun, that is, engendered it, and they were themselves made into poets by the magic power or artifice (*māyā́*) of the same Soma/Sun. In this way the Soma/Sun is both progenitor of the forefathers in their ritual role and, as they fulfill their ritual role, their child. The identity of the Gandharva in verse 4 is not entirely clear, but on the basis of parallels, especially in the Vena hymn mentioned above, it seems likely that it is again a double reference to Soma and the Sun, each guarding his

track (or perhaps the track of the other), thus taking up the theme of the track found in verse 2.

With the second half of verse 4 we return to a much clearer ritual context and to the filter with which we began. The filter traps the impurities of the soma as the liquid passes over it, and the priests attain (a reprise of the verb found twice in vs. 1) the prepared soma. The final verse (5) returns to the 2nd-person address to the ritual Soma, last found in the first half of verse 1. But the Soma thus addressed has achieved a much-elevated status: he is proclaimed a king, outfitted with cosmic garments and traveling a cosmic course, with the filter, the focus of the hymn, as his chariot. The very last words of the hymn attribute to him "lofty fame."

The omphalos structure of the hymn is quite pronounced. The outermost verses (1ab, 5) are couched in the 2nd person and have a clear ritual content, with an inner ring (vss. 1cd/2ab, 4cd) serving as transition between the ritual context and the mystical identifications. There are a number of formal responsions that mark these rings, besides the 2nd versus 3rd person of verses 1 and 5: *pavítram* (1a, 2a) / *pavítra*(*-ratha*) (5c); *páry eṣi* (1b) / *pári yāsi* (5b); *āśata* (1d, 4d); *padá-* (2a, 4a). Enclosed within these rings are the mysterious and shifting identifications that make the hymn both aggravating and mesmerizing.

1. The filter is outstretched for you, o lord of the sacred formulation.
   Advancing, you circle around its limbs on all sides.
   A raw one, with unheated body, does not attain it [=filter]; only the
   cooked ones, driving along, have attained it entirely.
2. The filter of the hot one is outstretched to the track of heaven; its blazing
   threads have been extended.
   His swift (steeds) aid the Purifier. They mount the back of heaven in
   their manifestation.
3. The dappled one at the front has made the dawns shine. The ox, seeking
   the prize, bears the worlds.
   They were measured out [=created] as masters of artifice by his artifice;
   the forefathers having their gaze on men set the embryo.
4. The Gandharva guards his track just so; the infallible one protects the
   races of the gods.
   The lord of snares [=filter] grasps the defiler with his snare. Those who
   best perform (ritual) action have attained the draught of honey.
5. You possessor of the oblation, as an oblation yourself you drive around
   the great heavenly seat, around the ceremonial course, clothing
   yourself in cloud.
   As king, having the filter as your chariot, you have mounted the prize.
   Having a thousand spikes, you win lofty fame.

IX.84 (796) Soma Pavamāna

Prajāpati Vācya
5 verses: jagatī

Unlike the last hymn, this one concentrates on the preparation of the soma, and, although he has a cosmic dimension (see esp. vs. 2), it is always clear that Soma is the topic and the referent. The most interesting image is found in verse 2, where Soma "performs the knotting and unknotting." On the ritual level, this phrase probably refers to Soma's journey through the tangle of sheep's wool on the filter, but comparison with IX.97.18 suggests that it also has moral force, with Soma separating and distinguishing the straight way from the crooked one.

1. Purify yourself—exhilarating the gods, unbounded, winning the waters—
   for Indra, for Varuṇa, for Vāyu.
   Make for us today wide space accompanied by well-being. Sing to the
   heavenly people in the wide dwelling place.
2. He who has mounted the worlds, immortal Soma flows around them all.
   Performing the knotting and unknotting in order to prevail, the drop
   accompanies (the gods?), like the sun the dawn.
3. He who is sent surging along with the cows onto the plants, prospering in
   the benevolence of the gods, bringing goods near at hand,
   he purifies himself with lightning, pressed in a stream—Soma,
   exhilarating Indra and the heavenly people.
4. This very Soma is purifying himself, thousand-winning, spurring on the
   vigorous speech that awakens at dawn.
   The drop rouses up the sea with his winds; he sits in the heart of Indra in
   the tubs.
5. The cows mix this soma with milk, him who is strengthened by milk—
   with thoughts, him who finds the sun.
   Winning the stakes, getting results, the sap purifies himself—an inspired
   poet, a sage poet through his poetic skill, who delights in the sun.

IX.85 (797) Soma Pavamāna

Vena Bhārgava
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 11–12

The last two hymns of the jagatī group, IX.85–86, break the standard pattern of decreasing numbers of verses, having twelve and forty-eight verses respectively, after a group of hymns with five verses (IX.75–84). However, each of these longer hymns can be divided into a series of shorter ones, which then conform to the patterns of hymn arrangement. In the case of IX.85, it consists of three groups of four verses each. The entire assemblage is attributed to Vena Bhārgava, also the supposed poet

of the enigmatic "Vena" hymn (X.123; see also a brief discussion under IX.83). As we will see, there are certainly striking similarities between the last quartet of IX.85 (vss. 9–12) and X.123.

The first quartet (vss. 1–4) begins with Soma the militant, keeping unworthy and hostile forces at bay and aiding Indra in the same enterprise (vss. 1–2). His relationship to Indra persists in verses 3–4, which show a more positive side of the militant Soma: his status as king (vs. 3) and winner of space for us (vs. 4).

The second section (vss. 5–8) is quite straightforward and focuses on the purification of the soma, deploying the standard tropes.

As noted the final four verses (9–12) strongly resemble the Vena hymn (X.123), but they are considerably easier to decode. They concern heavenly Soma, who is identified with the sun, but who also appears in a number of different guises: a bull, a poet, and a king (all in vs. 9), an ox (vs. 10), an eagle, a child, and a bird (vs. 11), and finally a Gandharva (vs. 12).

1. O Soma, when well pressed, flow around for Indra. Let affliction be gone, along with demonic power.
   Let the duplicitous not reach the exhilaration of your sap: let the wealth-bringing drops be *here*.
2. Spur us on in the clash, self-purifying one, for you are the skill of the gods, their dear exhilarating drink.
   Smash the rivals; (come) here to those seeking blessings. Drink the soma, Indra; smash down the scorners for us.
3. Undeceivable, you purify yourself as most exhilarating, o drop; you become the very self of Indra, the highest wellspring.
   Many men of inspired thought cry out to him; they seek out the king of this creation.
4. Having a thousand channels and a hundred streams, unerring, the drop, the desirable honey purifies itself for Indra.
   Winning a dwelling place, winning the waters, rush onward. Make a wide course for us, o Soma the rewarder.

5. Ever roaring, you are anointed [/driven] with cows in(to) the tub. You rush across the sheep's fleece all at once.
   Constantly being groomed like a winning steed, Soma, you have flowed entirely into the belly of Indra.
6. Purify yourself sweet for the heavenly breed, sweet for Indra whose name is lovely to call,
   sweet for Mitra, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Bṛhaspati—as the honeyed one not to be deceived.
7. The ten fingers groom the steed in the tub. The thoughts, the words of the inspired poets press forward.
   Purifying themselves, they rush to the lovely praise hymn. The exhilarating drops enter Indra.

8. Purifying yourself, rush to an abundance of heroes, to wide pasturage, to great, extensive shelter.
   Let no constricting pressure take control of this (soma) of ours. O drop, with you may we win prize after prize.

9. The wide-gazing bull has mounted heaven. The poet has caused the luminous realms of heaven to shine forth.
   The king goes ever bellowing across the filter. Those having the eyes of men milk for themselves the beestings of heaven.
10. In the vault of heaven the seekers milk honey-tongued, inexhaustible (streams) from the mountain-dwelling ox,
   the droplet growing strong in the waters, in the sea, the honeyed one in the wave of the river, in the filter.
11. The eagle that has flown to the vault—the many hymns of the trackers yearned after (him).
   The thoughts lick the child who always excites wonder, the golden bird standing on the earth.
12. The Gandharva has stood erect upon the vault, gazing upon all his forms.
   Radiance has flashed forth with blazing blaze; the blazing one has made the two world-halves, the mothers, shine forth.

IX.86 (798) Soma Pavamāna

Akr̥ṣṭās, the Māṣā seer-group (1–10); Siktatās, the Nivāvarī seer-group (11–20); Pr̥śnis, the Ajā seer-group (21–30); Atris (31–40); Atri Bhauma (41–45); Gr̥tsamada (46–48)
48 verses: jagatī, arranged in tr̥cas

As noted in the introduction to IX.85, this last hymn of the jagatī group, one of the longest in the R̥gveda, can actually be easily divided into smaller hymns, in this case into sixteen sets of tr̥cas, and can thus be made to conform to the patterns of hymn arrangement. The resulting triadic groupings do not at all match the divisions in the Anukramaṇī reproduced above. The degree of internal cohesion between tr̥cas varies considerably: some show no obvious signs of unity, while others (e.g., vss. 28–30) are stylistically unified. There is also some chaining across tr̥ca boundaries; for example, verse 4, which begins the second tr̥ca, is strictly parallel to verses 1 and 2 (especially the former). Such chaining is not an argument against the tr̥ca division, as perceived similarities between particular tr̥cas might have dictated the arrangement of originally separate hymns. The last tr̥ca (vss. 46–48), attributed to Gr̥tsamada, ends with the Gr̥tsamada clan refrain of Maṇḍala II.

That said, the impression this sprawling collection gives is of an agglomeration of soma-hymn clichés, many of which are repeated with little or no variation at irregular intervals throughout the "hymn."

1. Forth do your swift exhilarating drinks, sped by insights, rush, o self-purifying one, like the swift-born (birds) themselves.
   The heavenly, fine-feathered, honeyed drops, most exhilarating, take their seats around the cask.
2. Forth have your swift, exhilarating, invigorating drinks surged, like chariot-horses, each separately.
   As a milk-cow (goes) to her calf with milk, the drops, the honeyed waves (go) to Indra, possessor of the mace.
3. Like a steed being spurred, rush to the prize, to the cask of heaven, whose mother is the stone—
   you, the finder of the sun, the bullish Soma, being purified in the filter, on the sheep's back, for Indra's suckling.

4. Forth have your heavenly (hymns), sped by insight, destined for the Aśvins, surged with their milk into the support, o self-purifying one.
   Forth within (the support) have the seers sent their substantial (hymns) surging—those ritual experts who groom you, o you who win seers [?].
5. Your beacons circle around all the domains, though you are in advance—you ingenious one whose gaze is on all.
   Reaching through (the domains), you purify yourself, Soma, according to your ordinances. You rule as lord of all creation.
6. The rays, the beacons of the self-purifying one circle around on both sides, though he stays fixed.
   When the fallow bay is groomed in the filter, seated in his womb, he sits down in the tubs.

7. Beacon of the sacrifice, lovely at the ceremony, he purifies himself. Soma proceeds toward the rendezvous with the gods.
   Having a thousand streams, he rushes around the cask. The bull keeps bellowing as he goes across the filter.
8. The king plunges through the sea, the rivers. Fixed in the streams he accompanies the wave of waters.
   The self-purifying one has mounted upon the sheep's back, on the navel of the earth, as buttress of great heaven.
9. Thundering like the back of heaven he has roared, he according to whose ordinances both heaven and earth (abide).
   He purifies himself, always finding the fellowship of Indra. Soma, while being purified, sits in the tubs.

10. Light of the sacrifice, he purifies himself as its dear honey, the father, begetter of the gods, possessing conspicuous goods.
    He establishes a secret treasure in the two independent powers [=Heaven and Earth], as the most invigorating exhilarating Indrian sap.

11. Roaring toward the tub, the prize-seeker rushes, the lord of heaven with his hundred streams, wide-gazing.
    The fallow bay sits in the seats of Mitra, the bull constantly being groomed by the sheep, the streams.
12. At the forefront of the rivers, purifying himself he rushes; at the forefront of speech he goes foremost among the cows.
    At the forefront of the prize(-contest) he takes great stakes as his share. The bull of good weapons is purified by the pressers.

13. This one here, accompanied by thought, like a bird spurred on has run into the sheep's (fleece), purifying himself in a wave.
    By your resolve, o sage poet, by your insight, the clear Soma purifies himself between the two world-halves for you, o Indra.
14. Clothing himself in a mantle that touches heaven, the one worthy of the sacrifice, filling the midspace, is fitted into the worlds.
    While being born, he has stridden along the cloud toward the sun; he wishes to entice his age-old father here.
15. He extends his great shelter to the clan, when he has reached through his first domain.
    What is his footprint in the highest distant heaven—from that he proceeds toward all the (streams) in uninterrupted array.

16. Forth has the drop proceeded to the rendezvous with Indra: a comrade does not transgress against an agreement with his comrade.
    As a young blood rushes together with young women, so does Soma—into the tub, along a path with a hundred courses.
17. Forth have your insights stridden, arousing exhilaration, expressing admiration, inviting admiration in their joint dwellings.
    The inspired thoughts, the rhythms have roared to Soma; the milk-cows have mixed him with milk.
18. O Soma, o drop, purifying yourself, bring us continuous, swelling, unfailing refreshment by purifying yourself,
    (refreshment) that, never drying up, will milk out for us three times a day an abundance of good heroes, along with cattle, prizes, and honey.

19. The bull of the thoughts, wide gazing, purifies himself—Soma, the lengthener of day, of dawn, of heaven.
    Through the action of the rivers he has made the tubs bellow, entering the heart of Indra through (the action of) the inspired ones.
20. Through the inspired ones the primordial poet purifies himself; guided by men he has roared around the casks.
    Engendering the name of Trita, he flows as honey, to create the partnership of Indra and Vāyu.

21. This one here, being purified, has made the dawns shine widely; this one has become the maker of wide space for the rivers.
    This one, having milked thrice seven (cows) for his own milk-mixture—the exhilarating Soma purifies himself in a way dear to the heart.

22. Purify yourself, Soma, in the heavenly domains, surging into the tub, into the filter, o drop.
    Sitting in the belly of Indra, ever roaring, guided by the men, you have made the sun mount in heaven.
23. Pressed by the stones, you purify yourself in the filter, o drop, entering the belly of Indra.
    You have become one whose gaze is on men, wide-gazing one. Soma, you opened up the cowpen for the Aṅgirases.
24. You, o Soma, purifying yourself, do the very attentive poets applaud as they seek help.
    You did the fine-feathered (falcon) carry here from heaven, o drop, you who are adorned all over with all thoughts.

25. Seven milk-cows roar toward the tawny one being purified on the sheep's fleece in a wave all around.
    Into the lap of the waters, into the womb of truth have the Āyus, the buffaloes propelled the poet.
26. The drop being purified plunges beyond the scorners, making all paths good for the worshipful one.
    Making the cows into his raiment, the delightful poet, playful like a steed, rushes around the fleece.
27. Inexhaustible, possessing a hundred streams, excelling in beauty [/serving as mixture], they [=mixing waters] roar down to the tawny one as they provide water.
    The fingers groom him wreathed with cows, on the third back, in the luminous realm of heaven.

28. Yours are these offspring of the heavenly semen; you rule over all creation.
    And all this here is under your will, self-purifying one. You are the foremost founder of foundations, o drop.
29. You are the sea, o poet, the all-knowing [/-finding] one; yours are these five regions in your [/their] expansion.
    You have carried yourself beyond heaven and earth; yours are the lights, self-purifying one, and the sun.
30. You, o self-purifying Soma, are purified for the gods in the filter, in the expansion of space.
    You did the fire-priests first grasp; to you have all these worlds submitted themselves.

31. The husky-voiced one goes forth across the sheep's fleece; the tawny bull has roared down into the woods [/wooden vessels].
The hymnic visions, bellowing [/in their longing], have roared together. The thoughts lick the child who always excites wonder.
32. He has enveloped himself with the rays of the sun, stretching his own threefold thread, in the way that is known.
Leading the newer directives of truth, as a husband he proceeds to the rendezvous with his wives.
33. The king of rivers, the lord of heaven purifies himself. He proceeds along the paths of truth, ever roaring.
The tawny one is poured around with his thousand streams as he is being purified, begetting speech, bringing goods near at hand.

34. Purifying yourself as a great flood, brilliant like the sun, you run across the fleecy filters.
Hand-purified by the men, pressed by the stones, you dash for the great rich prize.
35. Self-purifying one, you rush toward refreshment and nourishment. Like a falcon in the woods, you sit in the tubs.
For Indra is pressed the exhilarative, exhilarating drink of exhilaration, the utmost prop of heaven, wide-gazing.
36. The seven sisters, as mothers, (go) to the newborn child of worthy birth, who is attentive to poetic inspiration,
the heavenly Gandharva of the waters, whose gaze is on men—to Soma, for the regulation of all creation.

37. Showing mastery, you speed across these worlds here, o drop, having hitched up your golden fine-feathered (mares).
Let them stream honeyed ghee and milk for you. O Soma, let the separate peoples stay under your commandment.
38. You, Soma, are one whose gaze is on men on every side. Purifying yourself, bull, you run across these (worlds).
Purify yourself in a manner rich in goods and gold for us. May we be (fit) to live in the worlds.
39. Purify yourself, as finder of cattle, of goods, of gold. Depositing seed, o drop, you are fitted into the worlds.
You, Soma, are rich in good heroes, finder of all [/all-knowing]. These inspired poets here reverently approach you with a hymn.

40. The wave of honey has raised (our?) desires; clothing himself in waters, the buffalo plunges through them.
The king whose chariot is the filter has mounted the prize. He of a thousand spikes wins lofty fame.
41. He rouses all blessings, consisting of offspring and easy to bear, through our whole lifetime, day upon day.

Then, o drop, when drunk, on our behalf beg Indra for a sacred formulation bringing offspring and for wealth consisting of horses in the homestead.

42. At the vanguard of the days [=dawn] the tawny, delightful, exhilarating drink makes himself conspicuous with his appearance through the days.
Setting in place the two peoples [=gods and men], he speeds between them in upholding the "praise of men" and the heavenly (praise).

43. They anoint him—anoint him separately and jointly. They lick (him who is) resolve; they anoint him with honey—
him, the ox flying in the burbling up of the river. (The waters,) who purify the gold (of soma), grasp the stock-animal within themselves.

44. Sing to the self-purifying one who is attentive to poetic inspiration. Like a great stream he rushes beyond his stalk;
like a snake he slinks beyond his withered skin. Playful like a steed, the tawny bull has run.

45. Going in the vanguard, the king who is found in the waters displays his power, the measure(r) of the days, fitted into the worlds.
The ghee-backed fallow bay, a flood lovely to see, having light as his chariot, accustomed to wealth, purifies himself.

46. It has been sent surging—the prop of heaven, the exhilarating drink held aloft. It rushes threefold around the worlds.
The thoughts lick the plant that always excites wonder, when the versifiers have come to array it with a hymn.

47. Your streams go forth beyond the fine (hairs) of the ewe; as you are being purified, there go continuous charges.
When, o drop, you are anointed with cows in the two cups, being pressed you sit in the tubs, Soma.

48. Purify yourself, Soma, finding the will, to be hymned by us. Run around in the sheep's fleece as dear honey.
Smite all rapacious demons, o drop. – May we speak loftily at the ritual distribution, in possession of good heroes.

Triṣṭubh Hymns: 87–97

IX.87 (799) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
9 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn, attributed to Uśanas Kāvya (perhaps because of the mention of that figure in vs. 3), is built in part of standard soma-hymn tropes, but the militant

Soma is particularly on view (vss. 2, 7), as well as his association with Indra (vss. 4, 8, 9). There are also the faintest sketches of Soma's participation in well-known myths: the Vala myth (vs. 3cd, where Soma is credited with finding the cows), the falcon's stealing of soma from heaven (vs. 6c), and the dog Saramā's role in the recovery of the cows in the Vala myth (vs. 8ab).

This last example neatly shows the integration of ritual and mythic themes. The first half of the verse, which alludes to the myth, does not identify the grammatical subject by name or attribute, but does use a pronoun to mark it as female. This might seem to exclude Soma as the referent—until we reach the final word of the verse: *dhā́rā* "stream," a feminine noun regularly used of the "stream of soma," which does allow the identification. From the mythological point of view, the dog Saramā comes out of the mountain and finds the cows in the cave; in ritual terms the (feminine) stream of soma comes out of the pressing apparatus and mixes with the cows' milk in the vessel. And this superimposition of ritual upon myth allows Soma, indirectly, to be identified as the rescuer of the cows himself, as in verse 3.

1. Run forth around the cask; sit down; being purified by men, rush to the prize.
   Grooming you like a prizewinning horse, they lead you toward the ritual grass with reins.
2. He of good weapons, the god, the drop purifies himself, smiting malediction, protecting the community,
   the father, begetter of the gods, possessing good skill, prop of heaven, buttress of the earth.
3. Seer, inspired poet, going in front of the people, an insightful craftsman [/R̥bhu], Uśanā in poetic skill—
   only he found what of theirs was deposited, the secret, hidden name of the cows.
4. This very one, honeyed Soma, has flowed for you, Indra, a bull for a bull, around in the filter.
   Thousand-winning, hundred-winning, much-giving, the prizewinner has mounted the ritual grass ever and always.
5. These soma drinks have been sent surging toward bovine thousands, toward acclamations, for great immortal reward,
   being purified by the filters—like fame-seeking steeds driving to battle.
6. Because, much invoked of the peoples, he has flowed around all nourishments while being purified—
   now bring pleasurable things, you falcon-brought one; thrusting out wealth, rush to the prize.
7. This Soma being pressed, the steed like a surge sent surging, has run around in the filter,
   whetting his sharp horns like a buffalo, on a cow-hunt toward cows, like a champion warrior.

8. This one traveled from within the highest stone [=mountain]; she found
   the cows that were somewhere in the enclosure.
   Like lightning from heaven thundering with the clouds, the stream of
   soma purifies itself for you, Indra.
9. And now while being purified, Soma, you drive around a throng of cows
   in the same chariot with Indra,
   and around many lofty refreshments, you of lively drops. Do your best,
   able one. These (refreshments? verses?) are your invitatory praise.

IX.88 (800) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is structured by a series of similes; only the first verse lacks an explicit simile. Many of the similes also involve identification of Soma with other divinities (see esp. vss. 3–5, 7), and so the powers and mythological deeds of these gods are implicitly attributed to Soma by way of these comparisons.

The two outer verses (1, 8) are complementary to each other. The first is addressed to Indra and announces the soma as distinctively his, while verse 8, emphasizing the 2nd-person pronoun as verse 1 did, declares that to Soma belong the distinctive qualities and attainments of the Ādityas.

1. This soma is pressed for you, Indra; for you it purifies itself.
   You—drink of it—
   the one that you have made your own, that you have chosen, the drop,
   the soma to be yoked for exhilaration.
2. It has been yoked, like a chariot that conquers much, as the great one to
   win many goods.
   Therefore, all creatures stemming from Nahus, standing upright beside
   the wood(en cup), roar at him at the winning of the sun.
3. You, who like Vāyu with his team maintain your desired course, who like
   the Nāsatyas are most availing at a summons,
   who like the Treasure-Giver in person bring all desirable things—like
   Pūṣan you give speed to insight, o Soma.
4. You, who like Indra are a doer of great deeds, are a stronghold-splitting
   smiter of obstacles, Soma.
   Because, like Pedu's (horse), (you are the smiter) of those with serpents'
   names, you are the smiter of every Dasyu, Soma.
5. He who, like Agni in the wood, is being set loose in the wood(en cup), he
   deploys his full dimensions in the rivers at will.
   Like people battling is the trampling of the great one. Self-purifying
   Soma raises a wave.

6. These soma juices have surged across the sheep's fleeces—they are like the heavenly buckets that hold the rain from clouds—
   toward the tubs at will when pressed, like rivers downward to the sea.
7. Tempestuous like the troop of Maruts, purify yourself, impervious to calumny like that heavenly clan.
   Quickly become benevolence for us, having a thousand ripples like the waters, like a sacrifice that conquers in battles.
8. The commandments of King Varuṇa are yours; yours is his lofty, deep domain, o Soma.
   You are blazing pure, like dear Mitra. You are besought for skill like Aryaman, o Soma.

IX.89 (801) Soma Pavamāna

Uśanas Kāvya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The standard tropes of soma preparation, the swelling of Soma in water, his manipulation by the priests' fingers, his journey across the filter, and his mixing with milk, provide the subject of this hymn, but, as often, each of these depictions has a cosmic dimension—as in verses 1–2, where Soma is compared with heavenly rain.

1. This draft-horse has streamed forth along the paths. Like the rain from heaven, the self-purifying one has flowed.
   Having a thousand streams, he has taken his seat by us, in the lap of his mother, and in the wood: Soma.
2. The king of rivers has donned his garment. He has boarded the ship of truth, (which goes) the straightest.
   The drop, sped by the falcon, has grown strong in the waters. His father yields him as milk; he yields as milk the offspring of his father.
3. They [=waters or cows] draw near the unbridled lion of honey, the tawny, ruddy master of this heaven.
   The champion, first in battles, asks for the cows for himself. The young bull protects them all around with his gaze.
4. The honey-backed, terrible, unbridled horse—they yoke that towering one to the wide-wheeled chariot.
   His sisters, his kin, groom him. Those who share an umbilical bond nourish the prizewinner.
5. Set down within the same support, four, yielding ghee as their milk, accompany him.
   They rush, being purified with homage. They, the many, surround him on all sides.

6. (He is) the prop of heaven, the support of the earth, and all the dwelling places are in his hand.
   Your wellspring will provide (horse-)teams to the singer. The plant of honey purifies itself for Indrian power.
7. Vanquishing but unvanquished, o Soma, as Vṛtra-smasher purify yourself for Indra and to pursue the gods.
   Have mastery over great, much-glittering wealth. Might we be lords of an abundance of heroes.

IX.90 (802) Soma Pavamāna

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Attributed to Vasiṣṭha, the poet of the VIIth Maṇḍala, this hymn ends (vs. 6d) with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain, encountered constantly in VII. Martial images dominate, starting with verse 1 and showcased especially in verse 3 (see also 4cd and 5ab). The aim of war, to secure peace and prosperity, is depicted in the center of the hymn (vs. 4ab). Some of the divine beneficiaries of Soma's invigorating capability are listed in verse 5.

1. Being propelled, the begetter of the two worlds has driven forth like a chariot, striving to win the prize,
   going to Indra, sharpening his weapons, taking all goods in his hands.
2. Toward the three-backed bull, who imparts vitality, have the voices of the songs bellowed.
   Clothing himself in the woods, like Varuṇa in the rivers, the conferrer of treasures distributes desirable things.
3. Having a horde of champions, having hale heroes, purify yourself as victorious conqueror and winner of stakes,
   with your sharp weapons and snapping bows invincible in combats, vanquishing your rivals in battles.
4. Providing broad pastures, creating (places) without danger, by purifying yourself procure the two united forms of plenty [=Heaven and Earth].
   Striving to win the waters, also the dawns, the sun, and the cows, you have roared together great prizes for us.
5. Exhilarate Varuṇa, o Soma; exhilarate Mitra. Exhilarate Indra, o self-purifying drop, and Viṣṇu.
   Exhilarate the troop of Maruts; exhilarate the gods. Exhilarate great Indra, o drop, for his exhilaration.
6. In this way, like a king full of resolve, ever smiting all obstacles to progress with your onslaught, purify yourself.
   O drop, impart vitality to our speech. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

IX.91 (803) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
6 verses: triṣṭubh

The first three verses of this hymn concentrate on the journey of the soma across the filter toward the mixing milk and toward Indra, but the militancy characteristic of the previous hymn (IX.90) asserts itself in verse 4. The final two verses (5–6) ask for bounties and blessings in return for our verbal and ritual service.

1. Billowing, he has been let loose as if at a chariot contest—the foremost inspired thinker with his insight.
   The ten sisters drive the draft-horse on the sheep's back toward the seats.
2. In pursuit of the heavenly race, the drop is being pressed on (it [=fleece]) by the poets, the sons of Nahus,
   the drop that is constantly being groomed (to go) forth by men—by mortals as the immortal—by the sheep, the cows, and the waters.
3. The bull roaring over and over to the bull [=Indra], the plant, purifying itself for him, moves toward the gleaming white milk of the cow.
   A versifier who knows speech, the sun travels widely across the fine (fleece) by a thousand unbesmirched paths.
4. Shatter even the entrenched seats of the demon. While being purified, o drop, uncover the prizes of victory.
   Hew down from above with your thrusting weapon the one who led here from afar those (enemies) who are (now) nearby.
5. As of old, make forward-facing paths for our newer hymn, o you who grant all wishes.
   Lofty (riches?), which are hard to capture by the covetous—might we attain them from you, o you who do many things and have many cattle.
6. Becoming purified in just this way, (grant) waters, the sun, and cattle to us, and ample progeny and posterity,
   luck, broad dominion, and lights to us, o Soma—grant that we may see the sun for a long time.

IX.92 (804) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Like many hymns in the IXth Maṇḍala this hymn describes Soma's journey, but here the focus is on the endpoint, on Soma's reaching his goal and taking his seat in the vessels: the "seat" theme is found in three of the six verses (2, 3, 6). Soma is

also a poet (vs. 2) and surrounded by poetry (vs. 3). It is this association with the *kaví*, the sage poet and master of words, that probably prompted the most striking statement in the hymn, that all the gods are "in your secret" (vs. 4). This statement comes in the middle of the hymn and may constitute a weak omphalos, especially as it is embedded in a series of verses that play with numbers (2–4), often a sign of an omphalos structure.

1. The tawny one, the plant, being pressed, is sent surging all around in the filter, like a chariot being urged on to win.
   He will achieve a signal-call meant for Indra as he is being purified. He has returned the favor to the gods through his pleasurable offerings.
2. His gaze on men, he has run here, acquiring the name "poet" in the filter, in his womb,
   taking his seat in the cups, like a Hotar on his seat. The seven inspired seers have approached him.
3. The very wise pathfinder who belongs to all the gods, Soma as he is being purified goes forth to his very own seat.
   He is one to take his rest amid all the poems. Steadfast, he arranges himself throughout the five peoples.
4. O self-purifying Soma, it is in your secret that all these gods are, the three times eleven.
   The ten (fingers) with their autonomous powers, the seven exuberant streams groom you upon the sheep's back.
5. Now, let this be true of the self-purifying one, this on which all the bards concur:
   that he made light for the day and wide space; he furthered Manu but made close quarters for the Dasyu.
6. Circling around, like a Hotar circling the seats provided with (sacrificial) animals, going to assemblies like a true king,
   Soma being purified has traveled to the tubs, taking his seat like a wild buffalo in the woods [/wooden cups].

IX.93 (805) Soma Pavamāna

Nodhas Gautama
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Attributed to Nodhas Gautama, the poet of I.58–64, this hymn ends with the clan refrain found in most of those Ist Maṇḍala hymns, although it does not display the virtuosity characteristic of those compositions. The first three verses concern the journey of the soma to the vessels and the mixing with water and with milk. The last two (4–5) are requests for bounties.

1. The ten sisters, grown strong all together, the insightful thoughts of the insightful one, the runners, groomed (him).
   The tawny offspring of the sun dashed around (the filter). He reached the wooden cup like a prizewinning steed.
2. Like a calf bellowing along with the mothers, the bull of many favors [/tail hairs] has run together with the waters.
   Like a young blood going to a maiden at the trysting place, he comes together with the ruddy (cows) in the tub.
3. And the udder of the inviolable cow has swelled forth; the drop of good wisdom is accompanied by streams.
   The cows prepare his head with their milk in the cups, as if with freshly washed goods.
4. O self-purifying drop, along with the gods excavate wealth in horses for us as you bellow.
   Let Plenitude come eagerly on her chariot in our direction, for the giving of goods.
5. Now, as you are being purified, mete out to us all-glittering wealth, abounding in superior men, befriended by the wind [/whose friendship is sought].
   The lifetime of the extoller has been extended, o drop. – Early in the morning—soon—he should come, bringing goods through his insight.

IX.94 (806) Soma Pavamāna

Kaṇva Ghaura
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The word *sóma* does not appear until the last pāda (5d) of this hymn, which plots a sometimes difficult course to this ending. The hymn features similes that exploit idiomatic ambiguity to produce different meanings in the simile proper and the frame (see esp. vss. 1 and 3) and by obscure turns of phrase (see esp. 4d). It is therefore not surprising that, as in IX.92, Soma is identified as a *kaví*, a poet, enmeshed in poetry (vs. 3), and the main focus of the hymn, especially in the first three verses, is the interchange between the poetic products of the mortal participants in ritual and those of Soma himself.

1. When the insightful thoughts contend over him, like adornments upon a prizewinner, like the clans over the sun,
   choosing the waters, he purifies himself, poetically crafting a thought like a stable for the raising of livestock,
2. Once again disclosing the domain of the immortal one. The worlds spread out for the finder of the sun.

The insightful thoughts, swelling like cows in good pasture, acting with truth, have bellowed to the drop,

3. When the poet encompasses (all) poems, as a champion chariot [/the chariot of the *Sun] (encircles) all the worlds,
   exerting himself among the gods for glory for the mortal, for his skill exerting himself anew for riches among (the gods) of much exertion.
4. Born for splendor, he has come forth from splendor; he establishes splendor and vitality for the singers.
   Clothed in splendor, they have gone to immortality. Their encounters come to pass beside the one of measured pace [=Agni].
5. Rush to refreshment and nourishment, to horse and cow. Make broad light; exhilarate the gods.
   Because all these things are easy to conquer for you, o self-purifying Soma, you repel the rivals.

IX.95 (807) Soma Pavamāna

Praskaṇva Kāṇva
5 verses: triṣṭubh

As in the preceding hymn, IX.94, the complementarity and interaction between Soma's poetic efforts and those of the ritualists provide the subject of this hymn. Soma's speech is the topic of the first two verses, culminating in 2cd in his revelation of the "hidden names of the gods" that will be proclaimed aloud on the ritual ground. But the verbal compositions of the mortals take center stage in verses 3–4. In the final verse (5), Soma both prompts the speech of others and (it seems) produces his own.

1. The tawny one keeps roaring as he is being set loose, as he is sitting in the belly of the wood, as he is being purified.
   Guided by men, he makes cows his raiment. Thereupon he generates poetic thoughts through his own powers.
2. The tawny one, having been set loose on the path of truth, directs his speech, like an oarsman his boat.
   The god reveals the hidden names of the gods to be proclaimed on the ritual grass.
3. Constantly overtaking each other like the waves of the waters, the inspired thoughts press forward to Soma.
   Doing homage, they come close to him and come together with him, and desirous they enter him, who is also desirous.
4. They milk him, constantly being groomed like a buffalo on the back (of the filter), the plant, the mountain-dwelling ox.
   The poetic thoughts accompany him as he bellows. Trita carries Varuṇa in the sea.

5. Inciting speech, as the Upavaktar incites the speech of the Hotar, while
being purified, o drop, unleash the inspired thought.
Since (you) and Indra have the power for good fortune, might we be
lords of an abundance of heroes.

IX.96 (808) Soma Pavamāna

Pratardana Daivodāsi
24 verses: triṣṭubh

This twenty-four-verse hymn, immediately following three five-verse hymns in the same meter, can easily be made to fit the sequence if it is analyzed as consisting of a collection of four-verse hymns, as Oldenberg clearly states (1888: 201). The six hymns thus obtained show different degrees of internal cohesion.

For example, the first four verses display clear thematic unity and development. The first verse is explicitly martial, with Soma as a warrior about to charge, a picture continued in the following verse. In verse 3 he achieves one of the most desired results of Vedic warfare, wide space for us to inhabit, and with this obtained, verse 4 articulates a counter-message, that of peace and nonviolence. Indra is explicitly mentioned in the first three verses, and comradeship is a central theme, as is seen in verses 1, 2, and 4.

The second hymn (vss. 5–8) shows stylistic progression. It begins with a rhetorically restricted verse (5), consisting primarily of seven repetitions of the word "begetter" with different genitive complements. The next verse (6) continues the dominantly nominal construction of vs. 5, but with a more varied verbal repertoire, though the nominative-genitive syntagm persists. Verse 7 continues to describe the qualities and characteristic actions of Soma, in the 3rd person, though it abandons the strict nominal style. And finally vs. 8 breaks out into the dynamic 2nd person and imperative mood.

The third group (vss. 9–12) ends with a characteristic hymn-final summary verse, which seems to mark a decisive break from what follows. Although no clear thematic unity imposes itself on the four verses, the focus on Soma's relationship with our ancestral ritualists and our hope that this relationship will continue fruitfully is noticeable, especially in the last two verses (11–12). On the other hand, it is difficult to identify any unifying features in the next group of four (vss. 13–16), which consist primarily of standard soma-hymn tropes. In verses 17–20 Soma as poet (esp. in vss. 17–18) and his journey from the filter to the cups provide a weak cohesion. In the final group (vss. 21–24), three verses (22–24) contain courtship imagery, and the root *krand* "roar" is prominent.

1. The army-leader, the champion, at the forefront of the chariots, goes
forth seeking cattle. His army bristles with excitement.

Making the invocations of Indra beneficial for his comrades, Soma puts on his ravishing garments.

2. The tawny ones [=fingers] jointly groom his tawny (horse), without resting, with acts of reverence that spur on the horse.
   The comrade of Indra mounts the chariot; the knowing one drives with him to our good thought.
3. Purify yourself, o god, for the conclave of gods, for great delight, o Soma, as Indra's drink.
   Creating the waters and making this heaven rain, from the wide (realm) make wide space for us as you are being purified.
4. For freedom from overthrow and freedom from assault purify yourself, for well-being, for lofty wholeness.
   This do all these comrades desire; this do I desire, o self-purifying Soma.

5. Soma purifies himself—the begetter of poetic thoughts, begetter of heaven, begetter of earth,
   begetter of Agni, begetter of the sun, begetter of Indra, and begetter of Viṣṇu.
6. Formulator for the gods, trail-blazer for the sage poets, seer for the inspired poets, buffalo of the wild beasts,
   falcon of the birds of prey, axe of the trees—Soma goes rasping through the filter.
7. Like a river its wave, self-purifying Soma has sent the wave of speech pulsing forth, the hymns, the inspired thoughts.
   Looking within, he surmounts these communities here below, a bull among the cows, recognizing them.
8. Exhilarating, vanquishing in battles but unvanquished, thousand-spurting—rush to the prize.
   Purifying yourself for Indra, o drop, as inspired thinker raise a wave from the plant, driving the cows.

9. The dear Soma, sought by the gods, (goes) around in the tub, the enjoyable one for Indra's exhilaration.
   The drop of a thousand streams, a hundred prizes, goes like a prizewinning team to the concourses.
10. The primordial one, finding goods (even) while being born, being groomed in the waters, being milked on the stone,
    protecting from imprecations, the king of creation, he finds the way for the sacred formulation as he is being purified.
11. Because with you, self-purifying Soma, our insightful forefathers performed their (ritual) acts,
    open up the barriers, vanquishing but unvanquished; become a benefactor to us with heroes and with horses.

12. Even as you purified yourself for Manu, as conferrer of vitality, smiter of foes, finder of wide space, accompanied by oblations,
just so purify yourself now, conferring wealth. Stand side-by-side by Indra. Generate weapons.

13. Purify yourself, Soma, rich in honey, following the truth, clothing yourself in waters, on the sheep's back.
Sit down in the cups full of ghee as the most elating, exhilarating drink for Indra.
14. Having a hundred streams, purify yourself into the rain from heaven—thousand-winning, seeking the prize in pursuit of the gods,
bellowing along with the rivers in the tub, along with the ruddy (cows), prolonging our lifetime.
15. This very Soma, being purified by poetic thoughts, like a prizewinning steed just outstrips hostilities.
Like the milk milked out of Aditi, it is invigorating, broad like a way, like a draft-horse easy to control.
16. Having good weapons, being purified by the pressers, rush to the dear hidden name (of the cows? of Indra?),
to the prize, like a team with desire for fame, to Vāyu, to the cows, o god Soma.

17. The colt just born, the delightful one they groom; the Maruts in a flock beautify the cart horse.
Though being a poet by virtue of his hymns, a poet by his poetry, Soma goes rasping across the filter.
18. Having the mind of a seer, a maker of seers, gaining the sun, having a thousand devices, trail-blazer for poets,
a buffalo, seeking to gain the third domain, Soma, as rhythm [/the anuṣṭubh meter], regulates the virāj (meter) according to rule.
19. Sitting in the cups, the falcon, the bird spreading (his wings), the cow-finding drop, bearing weapons,
accompanying the wave of the waters, the buffalo declares the sea to be the fourth domain.
20. Like a resplendent young blood grooming his own body, like a steed running to gain the stakes,
charging around the cask like a bull around the herds, constantly roaring he has entered the two cups.

21. Purify yourself, o drop, as self-purifying one, with your mighty powers. Constantly roaring, rush around the fleeces.
Playing, enter the two cups while being purified. Let your exhilarating sap exhilarate Indra.
22. His lofty streams have been sent surging forth. Anointed with cows he has entered the tubs.

Making a melody [/performing the sāman], devoted to a melody [/the sāman], attentive to poetic inspiration, roaring he goes as if to a comrade's sister.

23. Smiting aside the rivals, self-purifying one, you go like a swain to his beloved, the drop besung.
Sitting in the woods like a flying bird, Soma, being purified, has settled in the tubs.

24. As you purify yourself, Soma, your beams come here like a maiden—the good milkers giving good streams.
The fallow bay granting many favors, led hither into the waters, has roared in the tub of those who seek the gods.

IX.97 (809) Soma Pavamāna

Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi 1–3, Indrapramati Vāsiṣṭha 4–6, Vr̥ṣagaṇa Vāsiṣṭha 7–9, Manyu Vāsiṣṭha 10–12, Upamanyu Vāsiṣṭha 13–15, Vyāghrapād Vāsiṣṭha 16–18, Śakti Vāsiṣṭha 19–21, Karṇaśrut Vāsiṣṭha 22–24, Mr̥ḷīka Vāsiṣṭha 25–27, Vasukra Vāsiṣṭha 28–30, Parāśara Śāktya 31–44, Kutsa Āṅgirasa 45–58
58 verses: triṣṭubh, arranged in tr̥cas

This is the longest hymn in the R̥gveda, consisting of fifty-eight verses, arranged in three-verse units. It is also the last IXth Maṇḍala hymn in triṣṭubh. Despite its extraordinary length, it can be analyzed as consisting of a series of originally independent tr̥cas combined into one, and it therefore conforms to the prevailing principles of arrangement in the Saṃhitā. In the first half (vss. 1–30) each tr̥ca is attributed to Vasiṣṭha or to a different Vasiṣṭhid; the second half is divided between two, non-Vasiṣṭhid, poets. If we assume that the tr̥ca division continues in this second half (as most scholars do), the Anukramaṇī ascription does not conform to the tr̥ca division, as the first two verses of the tr̥ca of verses 43–45 are credited to Parāśara Śāktya and the last one to Kutsa Āṅgirasa. There is also an extra verse, most probably the final one (58), which contains the Kutsa refrain of Maṇḍala I (I.94.16cd, etc.). Although according to the Anukramaṇī each of these poets is responsible for fourteen verses, there is no more apparent unity in these larger stretches than in the individual tr̥cas of the first half.

As is often the case in such long, composite hymns, the tr̥cas exhibit varying degrees of cohesiveness, from the tight and emphatic verbal repetitions of verses 49–51 to the diffuseness of groupings like verses 7–9, 40–42. Some of the tr̥cas, though not thematically or verbally unified, have a third verse that marks it as final; for instance, the first two tr̥cas (vss. 1–3, 4–6) each end with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain as the last pāda, and the final verse of three tr̥cas begins with a summary *evā́* "thus" (vss. 13–15, 19–21, 25–27), a word characteristic of final verses.

As might be expected, the contents of this hymn are also extremely various, but generally exhibit the standard tropes of soma hymns: the mechanisms of

soma preparation, including the journey across the filter and the mixing with waters and with milk; the power of soma to incite the gods, especially Indra, and the power of the ritualists and, especially, the poets, to strengthen the soma for this task; and the rewards the ritualists will receive from properly preparing the soma. Nonetheless, the hymn contains a number of striking similes and metaphors, and some passages of great difficulty, chief among which is the tr̥ca of verses 52–54, which may (or may not) be a dānastuti and whose translation here is provisional in places. Note also verse 38, which in our interpretation contains an archaic formula denoting an archaic figure, the "Placer of the Sun" (see Jamison 2010).

1. Being purified by his impulsion, his drive, the god has intermingled his sap with the gods.
   Pressed, he goes rasping around the filter like the Hotar around the fixed seats provided with (sacrificial) animals.
2. Wearing auspicious festival garments, as a great poet pronouncing enigmas,
   coil yourself into the two cups while being purified, wide-gazing and watchful in the pursuit of the gods.
3. The dear one is groomed on the sheep's back, the more glorious of the glorious ones, a fellow countryman at our side.
   Cry out, run, as you are being purified. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

4. Sing forth: let us recite to the gods. Impel Soma for great stakes.
   The sweet one will purify himself across the sheep's fleece. He will sit in the tub, seeking the gods for us.
5. The drop, coming here to fellowship with the gods, purifies himself in a thousand streams for exhilaration.
   Being praised by men, he has gone along his earlier domain, to Indra for great good portion.
6. As a fallow bay, rush for wealth for the praiser as you are being purified. Let your exhilarating drink go to Indra for the taking.
   Drive on the same chariot with the gods to bounty. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

7. Speaking forth his poetry like Uśanā, the god proclaims the races of the gods.
   Of great commandment, of blazing lineage, pure, as a boar he goes rasping toward his tracks.
8. The geese have journeyed forth to (Soma's) sharp battle-fury, from nearby to their home, in a bullish flock.
   The comrades speak in unison to the self-purifying one a songful music difficult to forget.

9. He hastens at the pace of the wide-ranging one [=Viṣṇu?]. The cows, as they seem to bellow, give their measure to the one who plays at will [=Soma].
   The sharp-horned one makes himself an ample (face). By day he appears tawny, but silvery by night.

10. The prizewinning drop purifies himself, bringing cows down in flood—Soma stimulating the power in Indra, for exhilaration.
    He smashes demonic force; he deflects hostilities, making wide space as king of the community.
11. Then being infused with honey in a stream, he purifies himself across the fleece, when he has been milked by the stone,
    the drop enjoying the fellowship of Indra, the god, the exhilarating drink of the god, for exhilaration.
12. He purifies himself toward his own dear (tracks?), while being purified, the god infusing the gods with his own sap.
    The drop, clothing himself in his foundations according to the ritual order, has enwrapped himself in the ten fingers on the back of the sheep.

13. The ruddy bull keeps roaring at the cows; bellowing he goes to heaven and earth.
    His voice, like Indra's, is heard at the contest. He rushes, making this speech perceptible here.
14. Good to taste, swelling with milk, you go, setting in motion the honeyed plant.
    Purifying yourself, you go, producing thunder, while being poured around for Indra, o Soma.
15. Purify yourself thus, an exhilarating one for exhilaration, bowing with your weapons (those) of the water-grasper.
    Encompassing the glistening color, seeking cows, rush to us, when you are poured around, o Soma.

16. Having taken pleasure, o drop, (making) easy pathways easy to travel for us, purify yourself on a broad (path), making us wide spaces.
    Smashing asunder obstacles to progress as if with a deadly weapon, run along the back, on the sheep's back.
17. Stream rain to us—heavenly, hurrying, bringing refreshment, luck for the livestock, of lively drops.
    Run, pulling apart [=discriminating] these bonds here below, these webs, like straightened curls, o drop.
18. Untie like a knot the straight and the crooked way that are knotted up, when you are being purified, o Soma.
    Like a fallow bay steed you whinny on being let loose; run, o god, as a man in his prime in possession of a dwelling place.

19. Delightful, for the divine conclave for exhilaration, run around the back, on the sheep's back.
    Possessing a thousand streams, sweet-smelling, not to be outwitted, flow around at the winning of prizes, at the victory over superior men.
20. Though without reins, without chariot, not yoked, having been let loose like steeds in a contest,
    these gleaming soma-drinks run. O gods, drive right up to them, to drink them.
21. Thus, o drop, flow around the cloud, the flood in the cups, toward our pursuit of the gods.
    Let Soma give to us desirable, lofty wealth, powerful and abounding in heroes.

22. When the speech from the mind of the seeker fashioned him [=Soma] on the foundation of the preeminent one [=Agni or Indra?] or face-to-face with the cattle,
    thereupon the cows came to him at will, bellowing—to the delightful husband, the drop, in the tub.
23. The divine giver of drops, sweller of drops, (goes) forth. As truth, he purifies himself for truth, the very wise one.
    Possessing the (royal) mandate, he has become the king of what belongs to the community. He has been brought forward to the earth by the ten reins.
24. Purifying himself with the filters, having his gaze on men, as the king of gods and mortals
    he has become once again the wealth-lord of wealth; the drop bears the pleasing truth that is easy to bear.

25. Like a steed rushing to a win for the sake of fame, rush to the pursuit of Indra and Vāyu.
    Give us a thousand lofty refreshments; become a finder of chattels while you are being purified, o Soma.
26. Pursuing the gods while being poured around, let the soma drinks run to a dwelling place rich in good heroes,
    bringing favor here through sacrifice, possessing all desirable things, sacrificing at day(break) like Hotars, most gladdening.
27. Thus, o god Soma, purify yourself for the conclave of gods, for their great delight, as the gods' drink,
    for we are greatly driven at the encounter. Make the two world-halves of good standing while you are being purified.

28. Like a horse you whinny on being yoked by the bulls, fearsome like a lion, swifter than mind.

Along paths turned hitherwards—those which are the straightest—
bring benevolence here to us by purifying yourself, o drop.

29. A hundred god-generated streams have been sent surging; these thousand the poets groom.
O drop, by purifying yourself bring here from heaven a means of winning. You are the leader of great spoils.
30. Like surges from heaven, (like those) of days, his surges have surged. Like a king, the wise one does not violate his alliance.
Being put in your place according to our intentions, like a son according to the intentions of his father, bring freedom from overthrow here to this clan by purifying yourself.

31. Your honeyed streams have surged forth, when, purified, you go across the sheep's fleece.
Self-purifying one, purify yourself as the domain for the cows. On being born, you swelled the sun with rays [/chants].
32. Ever roaring along the path of truth, gleaming you radiate across the domain of the immortal one [=sun?].
Providing the means for exhilaration, you purify yourself for Indra, spurring on your own speech with the thoughts of the poets.
33. As heavenly eagle, o Soma, gaze down, swelling the streams with (ritual) action in the pursuit of the gods.
O drop, enter the tub for holding the soma. Roaring, come right up to the ray of the sun.

34. The draft-horse rouses forth the three voices, the hymnic vision of truth, the inspired thought of the sacred formulation.
The cows go asking for a cowherd; the thoughts go bellowing eagerly to Soma.
35. To Soma (go) the milk-cows bellowing eagerly; to Soma the inspired poets asking for him with their thoughts.
Soma, pressed, is purified while being anointed [/driven]; to Soma the chants, the triṣṭubh verses cry out together.
36. Thus, o Soma, being poured around, being purified, bring well-being here to us through your purification.
Enter Indra with a lofty shout; strengthen speech, beget plenitude.

37. In accordance with truth, the wakeful inspired poet of the thoughts, Soma, being purified, has sat down in the cups,
he whom they serve, eager in rivalry—the Adhvaryus of good hands, the charioteers (of the sacrifice).
38. He, being purified close by, like the Placer of the Sun has filled both world-halves, and he has disclosed them.
He with whose help the winners of dear things (win) dear things, he will extend spoils as if to a victor.

39. The strengthening strengthener, being purified, Soma the rewarder, helped us with his light,
   with which our forefathers, knowing the track, finding the sun, burned the cows out of the rock.

40. As the sea he has roared at his first expansion, begetting the creatures as king of creation.
   The bull in the filter, on the sheep's back, Soma has grown loftily, the drop being pressed.
41. Soma the buffalo performed this great (deed), that [/when] as embryo of the waters he chose the gods.
   Purifying himself, he placed strength in Indra. The drop begat the light in the sun.
42. Exhilarate Vāyu for his quest and for our benefit; exhilarate Mitra and Varuṇa, while you are being purified.
   Exhilarate the Marutian troop; exhilarate the gods; exhilarate Heaven and Earth, o god Soma.

43. Purify yourself, as the straight smiter of the crooked, thrusting away affliction and insults,
   perfecting your milk with the milk of cows. You are (the comrade) of Indra; we are your comrades.
44. Purify yourself into the sweetness of honey, into a wellspring of goods; by purifying yourself bring here to us a hero and a portion.
   Sweeten yourself for Indra as you purify yourself, o drop, and by purifying yourself bring here to us wealth from the sea.
45. Soma, pressed in a stream, driving like a steed, has streamed like a river to the deep, as prizewinner.
   He has sat in the wooden womb while being purified. The drop has flowed together with the cows, with the waters.

46. This very Soma purifies himself for you, o Indra, in the cups, insightful and powerful for you who desire it—
   the charioteer having the eye of the sun, whose impetuosity is real, who has been sent surging like the desire of those who seek the gods.
47. He, being purified with age-old vitality, hiding himself in the forms of the daughter (of the Sun [=Dawn]) [=milk],
   in the waters clothing himself in shelter providing threefold defense, rasping like a Hotar he drives to the concourses.
48. Now, you, o god Soma, as charioteer—flow around for us in the two cups, while being purified,
   sweetest in the waters, honeyed, truthful, you whose thoughts become reality, like god Savitar's.

49. Rush toward Vāyu in pursuit while being hymned, toward Mitra and Varuṇa while being purified,

toward the superior man who quickens insightful thought and bestrides the chariot, toward Indra the bull with the mace in his arms.

50. Rush toward your garments that garb well, toward the good-milking cows, while being purified,
toward glittering golden goods, to bring them to us, and toward chariot horses, o god Soma.
51. Rush toward heavenly goods for us, toward all earthly goods, while being purified,
toward that by which we shall win property, (that is,) toward a seer's (portion) for us like that of Jamadagni.

52. By purifying yourself with this purification bring goods here in this way. O drop, at (the time of) the hiding of the moon [=early morning] run forth into the lake.
The copper-colored (Sun/Fire), sped like the wind, is also there. The very wise one [=Soma?] also gives (to us) the superior man [=Indra?] to make the charge.
53. And with this purification purify yourself for us at the famous ford of the (prize/wealth) worthy of fame [=place of distribution of dakṣiṇās?].
The challengers' challenger [=Indra?] will shake off sixty thousand goods like ripe (fruit) from a tree, for our joy.
54. Of him—"Bull" his name—there are these two great forceful weapons of death either at the hiding of the moon or at the caressing [=mixing soma with milk]:
he put the challengers to sleep and "snowed" them. Turn back from here those without alliance (with us), back those without perception.

55. You converge on the three filters stretched out, but you run along just one while you are being purified.
You are Bhaga, you are the giver of the gift; you are bounteous to the bounteous ones, o drop.
56. This one, knowing all, possessing inspired thoughts, purifies himself—Soma, the king of all creation.
Rousing the droplets at the rites, the drop proceeds over and across the sheep's fleece all at once.
57. The undeceivable buffaloes lick the drop. On his track the poets squawk like birds of prey.
The insightful ones impel him with their ten fingers. They jointly anoint his form with the sap of the waters.

58. With you who purify yourself, o Soma, we would pull out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the match, time after time.
– This let Mitra and Varuṇa grant this to us, and Aditi, River, and Earth and Heaven.

Anuṣṭubh Hymns: 98–101

IX.98 (810) Soma Pavamāna

Ambarīṣa Vārṣāgira and R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja
12 verses: anuṣṭubh, except br̥hatī 11

The themes that dominate this hymn are standard soma tropes. The normal stages in the preparation of the soma are treated (see esp. vss. 2–3, 6–10), and the poet regularly reminds Soma of the gifts he should bring to his mortal preparers (see esp. vss. 1, 4–5, 12). Indeed the hymn begins and ends with an appeal for *vā́ja* "prizes" (vss. 1a, 12cd), in a sort of ring composition.

However, although the sentiments expressed and descriptions provided are unremarkable, the hymn is characterized by very choppy and sometimes incoherent syntax (which for purposes of translation has been cleaned up somewhat). Since there are also metrical disturbances in the hymn, one wonders if it has been transmitted entirely correctly.

1. O drop, stream to us the wealth coveted by many that best wins the prize,
   bringing a thousand presents, powerfully brilliant, vanquishing (even) the distinguished.
2. This one, being pressed, has engirded himself in the sheep's fleece, as a man on a chariot does in armor.
   The drop, impelled by the wooden (paddle), has flowed in streams while being impelled.
3. This drop, being pressed, has flowed around in the sheep's fleece, aroused to exhilaration,
   the one who, erect at the ceremony, goes seeking cows with his stream, like (Agni) with his flame.
4. Because you, o god, are goods for each and every pious mortal,
   o drop, you seek to win wealth in thousands, which has a hundred embodiments.
5. May we be (most nearest) to these goods of yours, coveted by many, o good one, Vr̥tra-smasher,
   most nearest to your refreshment and favor, o you who are not poor.
6. The self-glorious one, smashed by stones, whom the twice five sisters
   bathe—the one dear and desirable to Indra, full of waves,
7. This delightful tawny brown one they purify all around with the fleece,
   him who circles around all the gods together with his exhilarating drink.
8. For with his help (the gods) are drinking (the exhilarating drink) that brings skill to realization,

the delightful one who has placed lofty fame among your [=poets'] patrons, like the sun (in heaven).

9. The drop has been born of you two at the sacrifices—o you two world-halves [=jaws of soma press?], goddesses who (yet) belong to mankind—
the mountain-abiding god. Unfailingly, very noisily (I praise?) him.

10. O Soma, you are poured around for Indra, the Vr̥tra-smiter, to drink,
and for the superior man who gives priestly gifts, and for the god sitting on the seat.

11. The age-old soma drinks have flowed into the filter at the break of dawn,
snorting away into the distance those who know the crooked ways and those without discernment, early in the morning.

12. O comrades, might we and you, our patrons, attain him who shines in front,
whose prizes are to be secured. Might we gain him who offers a house full of prizes.

IX.99 (811) Soma Pavamāna

Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except br̥hatī 1

The varieties of thought and its poetic expressions are the focus of this hymn, especially in its earlier verses (1–2, 4–5), and Soma's mental and verbal powers complement those of his mortal worshipers (vs. 6). The physical preparation of soma is not neglected, however (esp. vss. 3, 7–8).

1. For the delightful daring one they draw the bow, the manly power.
Those seeking the great one weave a glowing garment for their lord at the forefront of the inspired words.

2. And prepared by night, he plunges toward the prizes,
when the insightful thoughts of Vivasvant impel him, the tawny one, to drive.

3. We groom this one of his [=Vivasvant?], the one who is exhilaration, Indra's best drink,
whom the cows have previously sucked with their mouths and now the patrons do.

4. They have cried out to him with an ancient song, while he is being purified.
And the insightful thoughts yearn for him, those bearing the names of the gods.

5. They purify him on the sheep's fleece, while the steadfast one grows strong.
Those of inspired thought hope for him to be like a messenger, (for them) to be first in his thought.

6. Becoming purified, the most exhilarating Soma sits in the cups,
depositing his seed (in them) as if in livestock. The lord of insight
displays his eloquence.
7. He is groomed by those who work well [=fingers], the god pressed for
the gods.
As his complete attachment to them [=waters] is known, he plunges
through the great waters.
8. O drop, pressed and held by men, you are led through into the filter.
As the one most exhilarating for Indra, you sit down here in the cups.

IX.100 (812) Soma Pavamāna

Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
9 verses: anuṣṭubh

As Oldenberg suggests (1888: 128–29), in order to conform to the principles of arrangement, this hymn must have originally consisted of two separate hymns, of five and four verses respectively. This division, made solely on numerical grounds, is confirmed by the structure of the hymn, for the final four verses repeat or ring changes on the first five. Verse 6, the first of the original second hymn, is structurally, and in part verbally, identical to the final verse of the original first hymn (5), but also incorporates, in variant form, verse 4d. Verse 7 repeats much of verse 1 in different order. Verse 8 deviates more from its model, verse 2, but reproduces verse 2d verbatim as verse 8d. Verse 9 is the most distant from its model, verse 3, but contains the "heaven and earth" found in the "earthly and heavenly goods" of 3cd. Once again we see the ways in which the R̥gvedic poet uses formulaic language and poetic templates for his own purposes.

1. Those without deceit cry out to him, dear and desirable to Indra.
The mothers lick him like a calf in its first stage of life, just born.
2. While being purified, o Soma drop, bring here doubly lofty wealth.
You foster all goods in the house of the pious man.
3. Set loose the insightful thought yoked with mind, as thunder
does rain.
You foster earthly and heavenly goods, o Soma.
4. Your stream, when you are pressed, runs in a circle like (the horse) of a
victor,
speeding through the sheep's fleece like a winner bringing prizes.
5. For our will and skill, o poet, purify yourself in a stream, Soma,
pressed for Indra to drink, for Mitra and Varuṇa.

6. Purify yourself as best winner of prizes in the filter, pressed in a stream,
most honeyed for Indra and Viṣṇu, for the gods, Soma.

7. The mothers, those without deceit, lick you, the tawny one, in the filter,
   as milk-cows do a new-born calf, o self-purifying one, at your expansion.
8. O self-purifying one, you drive to great fame with your brilliant rays.
   Vaunting yourself, you keep smashing away all the dark shades in the house of the pious man.
9. O you of great commandment, you have carried yourself beyond heaven and earth.
   You have fastened on your mantle in your greatness, self-purifying one.

IX.101 (813) Soma Pavamāna

Andhīgu Śyāvāśvi (1–3), Yayāti Nāhuṣa (4–6), Nahuṣa Mānava (7–9), Manu Sāṃvaraṇa (10–12), Prajāpati (13–16)
16 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 2–3, arranged in tr̥cas

In order to conform to the pattern of arrangement, this last hymn in the anuṣṭubh group must actually have consisted originally of five three-verse hymns, with a single verse (16) appended, as was already pointed out by Oldenberg (1888: 201). There is, however, some interconnection among the tr̥cas that points to a sense of cohesion. In particular, the first and last tr̥cas (vss. 1–3 and 13–15) are linked by the striking image in their first verses (1, 13) of a sacrifice-defiling dog drawn to the sound of the soma being pressed, a dog that must be driven away. Verse 13 also contains a brief and enigmatic allusion to a myth also enigmatically mentioned to in X.171.2.

Most of the rest of the hymn contains standard material: the details of preparation of the drink and its journey across the filter to mix with the milk, as well as its relationship to the gods, especially Indra. There is some internal unity visible in the individual tr̥cas, but it is not pronounced.

1. With your advance victory over the stalk, for the pressed soma to cause exhilaration,
   pierce away the dog that has the long tongue, o comrades.
2. What flows forth and around in a pure stream, the pressed
   drop, like a horse that gets results,
3. That one, the soma, poor at burning [?], do the superior men, with their insight aimed toward all,
   impel to the sacrifice with stones.

4. The most honeyed pressed soma drinks, exhilarating to Indra,
   provided with filters, have flowed. Let your exhilarating drinks go to the gods.
5. "The drop purifies himself for Indra," so the gods said.
   The lord of speech does battle [/seeks bounties], holding sway over all with his strength.

6. Possessing a thousand streams he purifies himself, a sea setting speech aswing,
Soma, lord of riches, comrade of Indra, day after day.

7. This one here is Pūṣan, Wealth, Fortune; Soma rushes as he is being purified.
As lord of all creation, he has surveyed both world-halves.
8. Together the dear ones have cried out to him, the cows avid for exhilaration.
The soma drinks make their own paths, the self-purifying drops.
9. The one who is strongest [=Indra], bring him here, o self-purifying one, the one worthy of fame,
who sur(mounts) the five domains, with whom we shall gain wealth.

10. The soma drops purify themselves, as best pathfinders for us,
allies, unblemished, rich in purpose, finding the sun, when they are being pressed.
11. Having been pressed by the stones, conspicuous on the hide of the cow,
the finders of goods have roared together from all around toward refreshment for us.
12. These purified soma juices, attentive to poetic inspiration, mixed with curds,
are worthy to be seen like suns, mobile yet fixed in the ghee.

13. Like a mortal he [=the dog] has shown preference for the speech of the stalk being pressed.
Smite away the dog, the ungenerous one, as the Bhr̥gus (did) the Battler.
14. Their kinsman has wrapped himself in a cloak (of milk) to enjoy it, like a son in the two arms (of his mother).
He runs like a swain to a maiden, like a wooer, to sit in the womb.
15. He is a hero, bringing skill to realization, who has propped apart the two world-halves.
The tawny one has wrapped himself in the filter, like a ritual adept, to sit in the womb.

16. Soma purifies himself with the fleeces of sheep, on the cow's hide.
Ever roaring, the bullish fallow bay goes to his rendezvous with Indra.

Uṣṇih Hymns: 102–106

IX.102 (814) Soma Pavamāna

Trita Āptya
8 verses: uṣṇih

The many obscurities in this hymn exist in tension with the clarity of its larger structure: it is a ring composition, with a pāda-length phrase in the first and last verses (1b, 8c) defining the ring: "spurring on the visionary power of truth." This phrase also sets one of the underlying themes, that Soma during his preparation inspires and creates poetic truth. There is clarity also in the general progression of the hymn, which follows Soma's journey from the press (vs. 2) and across the filter (vs. 3) to his final preparation (vs. 7). Another theme that runs throughout is that of Soma as a child in relation to his mothers (vss. 1, 4, 7; see also 6), who not only gave him physical birth but also formed him in his ritual rule (see vs. 4).

It must be admitted, however, that much remains puzzling in the hymn. There are a number of problems of syntax and lexicon. The two adjacent appearances of Trita (or "the third one," vss. 2–3) are also unclear, though they clearly play on the numerals two and three found in those verses. The hymn is ascribed by the Anukramaṇī to Trita Āptya, and so it might be that the poet is simply inserting himself in the poem. But, since Trita Āptya is actually a mythological figure, it is more likely that the Anukramaṇī has assigned the hymn to that figure on the basis of the occurrences of *tritá* in those two verses.

1. Through his action the child of the great (rivers), spurring on the visionary power of truth,
   encompasses all dear things—now once again.
2. In the two "jaws" [?] [=soma press?] of Trita [/the third one], when he [=Soma] took to the hidden track,
   (he traveled) through the seven domains of the sacrifice—now, right to his own dear (place).
3. (Across) the three (filters), on the backs of Trita ("the third one"), in a stream—rouse wealth!—
   he measures out the stages of his journey—the very resolute one.
4. The seven mothers [=rivers?] instructed him as a ritual adept, when he was born for splendor.
   This one is the enduring (treasure) of treasures, since he paid attention (to his mothers).
5. Under his commandment are all the gods of one accord and without deceit.
   Eagerly sought are your joys, since they [=gods] take pleasure (in them).
6. The embryo that those strong through truth have begotten as lovely to see,
   the poet, most liberal at the ceremony, sought by many—
7. Toward (him) the two youthfully exuberant mothers of truth [=world-halves? Night and Dawn?] go, conjoined but each in her own person—
   when stretching the sacrifice in due order, they [=priests] anoint (him).
8. Through your resolve, with gleaming eyes, you unclosed the pen of heaven,
   spurring the visionary power of truth forth in the ceremony.

IX.103 (815) Soma Pavamāna

Dvita Āptya
6 verses: uṣṇih

The most salient stylistic feature of the hymn is the preverb that begins each verse—*pári* "around" in all but the first verse—with the preverb increasingly less integrated syntactically with the rest of the verse. The focus on *pári* arises from the description of the motion of the soma as it is poured in circles into the filter.

Like the last hymn, this one follows the journey of Soma and also focuses on his ritual role and his participation in reciprocal ritual speech. Not only do we find the technical term *vedhás* "ritual adept' (vs. 1), as in IX.102.4 and 101.15, but also the likewise technical *vāghát* "cantor" (vs. 5) in its only appearance in the IXth Maṇḍala. The poet's presentation of his speech and poetic thoughts in verse 1 and the voices of the seers in verse 3 are met by Soma as himself "leader of thoughts" in verse 4.

The hymn shares some lexical and thematic material with the immediately preceding IX.102. In addition to the aforementioned *vedhás*, note, for example, the cleverly variant pādas 102.5b and 103.4b, which both contain "all the gods" and lack of deceit. But in 103 all the gods are embedded in a compound modifying Soma, whereas in 102 they are syntactically independent; moreover, the "deceit" theme is carried by two different roots (*dabh, druh*) in two different valences: the gods of 102 do not deceive, while Soma in 103 cannot be deceived. It is difficult not to consider 102 and 103 as composed in conversation with each other, and the Anukramaṇī's ascription of 103 to *Dvita* Āptya ("the second Āptya") clearly plays off 102's *Trita* Āptya ("the third Āptya"—but also the original Āptya from a mythological perspective, since he is a commonly mentioned figure and has an Avestan correspondent, whereas Dvita Āptya is essentially found only here).

1. Forth to the ritual adept, to Soma as he is being purified, shall I bear the upraised speech
   like a present, along with my thoughts. He will find enjoyment.
2. Around the sheep's fleeces he rushes, being anointed with cows.
   Being purified, the tawny one creates three seats for himself.
3. Around the cask dripping with honey he rushes on the sheep's fleece.
   The seven voices of the seers have cried out to him.
4. Around (he rushes)—the leader of thoughts, belonging to all the gods, undeceivable.
   Soma the tawny, being purified, entered the two cups.
5. Around—following your divine independent powers, drive in the same chariot with Indra,
   being purified as an immortal cantor by cantors.
6. Around—like a prize-seeking team, the god pressed for the gods,
   reaching through (it), the self-purifying one runs through (the filter).

IX.104 (816) Soma Pavamāna

Parvata Kāṇva and Nārada Kāṇva, or the two Apsarases named Śikhaṇḍinī, daughters of Kaśyapa
6 verses: uṣṇih

This hymn forms a close pair with 105 and the two are a textbook demonstration of how R̥gvedic poets generate variations on underlyingly identical lexical and thematic material. The two hymns correspond verse by verse, and even in translation the identity of many of the words, their grammatical forms, and whole phrases is clear. But the poets avoid pāda-length repetitions and introduce variation via lexical replacement or grammatical transformation.

The contents are unremarkable; both hymns deploy the usual soma-hymn tropes, though the final apotropaic verse is refreshingly vivid.

1. Comrades, sit down here; sing forth to him as he is being purified.
   With sacrifices attend on him like a child for splendor.
2. Send him like a calf to join with his mothers—him who brings success to the household,
   who pursues the gods, the exhilarating drink with double strength.
3. Purify him who brings success to skill, for him to pursue the troop (of Maruts),
   to be most wealful for Mitra and Varuṇa.
4. The voices have cried out to you, the finder of goods for us.
   With cows we will clothe your color.
5. O drop, lord of exhilarating drinks—you are the one affording delight to the gods—
   like a comrade for a comrade, become the best finder of the way for us.
6. Put away from us bag and baggage any demonic devourer whatsoever.
   Keep away from us the godless double-dealing one, away difficult straits.

IX.105 (817) Soma Pavamāna

Parvata and Narada
6 verses: uṣṇih

For discussion of this twin to IX.104, see the introduction to that hymn.

1. Comrades, sing to him while he is being purified for your exhilaration.
   Like a child they sweeten him with sacrifices, with greetings.
2. Like a calf, being impelled to join with his mothers, he is driven [/anointed],
   pursuing the gods, the exhilarating drink adorned all around with thoughts.

3. Here is the one bringing success to skill; here is the one to pursue the troop.
   Here is the pressed drink, most honeyed for the gods.
4. When pressed, o well-skilled drop, run for us (with goods) in cows and horses.
   I have fixed your gleaming color among the cows.
5. O drop, lord of the fallow bays, as the one who best affords delight to the gods,
   like a manly comrade for a comrade, be there for our illumination.
6. (Put) away from us bag and baggage any ungodly devourer whatsoever.
   Having prevailed, o drop, (parry) oppressions, (keep) away the double-dealing one.

IX.106 (818) Soma Pavamāna

Agni Cākṣuṣa (1–3), Cakṣus Mānava (4–6), Manu Āpsava (7–9), Agni Cākṣuṣa (10–14)
14 verses: uṣṇih

This last hymn in the uṣṇih collection, as is common with hymns positioned at the end of their metrical grouping, is too long and needs to be broken down into smaller units: four tr̥cas (vss. 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12) followed by a two-verse hymn (13–14). In this case the division is in general accord with the Anukramaṇī, which ascribes the hymn to three different mythical poets, marked by their patronymic relationships as grandson, son, and father, each with a tr̥ca. The grandson returns as poet of the last five verses, that is, of the final tr̥ca (10–12) and the two-verse unit that ends the hymn.

The contents of the hymn are entirely conventional, with a focus on Indra as drinker of the soma, especially in the first part of the hymn. Note that "finding the sun" is also a preoccupation, and that word (*svarvíd*) appears once in each of the first three tr̥cas (vss. 1, 4, 9).

1. Let these pressed (soma drinks) go to Indra, the tawny ones to the bull,
   the drops born because of (Indra's?) attentive hearing, finding the sun.
2. This one here, bringing gain for the taking, purifies himself for Indra when pressed.
   Soma takes note of the victorious one, as is (well) known.
3. Indra, in the raptures of just this (soma), grabbed a handful bringing gain,
   and he carried the bullish mace—he who is entirely victorious in the waters.

4. Run forth as the wakeful one, o Soma; flow around for Indra, o drop.
   Bring here brilliant tempestuous force that finds the sun.

5. For Indra purify yourself into bullish exhilaration, as the one visible to all,
possessing a thousand courses, path-making, wide-gazing.
6. The best finder of the way for us, most honeyed for the gods,
drive along your thousand paths, ever roaring.

7. Purify yourself in streams, o drop, to pursue the gods with strength.
Honeyed, sit in our tub, o Soma.
8. Your droplets, swimming in water, have strengthened Indra for exhilaration.
The gods have drunk you for immortality
9. O you pressed drops, run wealth to us here while being purified,
bringing the heavens to rain and the waters to streaming, finding the sun.

10. Soma, being purified in a wave, runs across the fleece of the sheep,
at the forefront of speech, self-purifying, ever roaring.
11. With insights they impel the prizewinner, playing in the wood, across the sheep [=fleece].
The thoughts sound together toward the three-backed one.
12. He has been sent surging toward the tubs, like a prize-seeking team at a competition.
Being purified, begetting speech, he has flowed.

13. The delightful fallow bay purifies himself, across the tufts, at speed,
streaming glory consisting of heroes to the praisers.
14. In this way purify yourself, seeking the gods. The streams of honey have been sent surging.
Rasping, circle around the filter on all sides.

Hymns Arranged in Pragāthas: 107–108

IX.107 (819) Soma Pavamāna

Seven Seers
26 verses: br̥hatī alternating with satobr̥hatī, arranged in pragāthas, except dvipadā virāj bhurij 3 and dvipadā virāj 16 as supplemental verses to the preceding pragātha

This long hymn mostly stays focused the usual themes of the IXth Maṇḍala: the pressing of Soma, his journey across the filter, his entry into the waters, his mixing with cows' milk, and his arrival at his destination, the wooden cups. Interspersed

are references to Soma's cosmic aspect (e.g., the heavenly udder in vs. 5) and cosmic deeds (e.g., making the sun mount in heaven, vs. 7). Especially prominent in the middle and late parts of the hymn are mentions of the sea (vss. 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 23), referring both to the waters that the soma enters and to the expanse of soma itself.

Toward the end the hymn takes a slightly personal turn, in the pragātha of verses 19–20, where the poet celebrates his fellowship with Soma and, by implication, the mental state he achieves from drinking the soma. In particular, 20cd "We have flown like birds far past the sun…" recalls several famous 1st-person descriptions of soma's effects: VIII.48.3 "We have drunk the soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods" and X.119, the Laba-sūkta, in which the soma-drinker flies through the cosmos, describing his bird's eye view of heaven and earth.

1. From here sprinkle around the pressed drink, which is the soma, the highest oblation.
   The manly one who has run within the waters, the soma did he [=the priest] press with stones.
2. Now, while being purified by the sheep, flow around as one who is undeceivable, very sweet-smelling.
   Even when (you) have just been pressed in the waters, we become exhilarated by your stalk, while preparing you with cows as the higher (oblation),
3. Being pressed all around to be seen—the exhilarator of the gods, the wide-gazing drop that is resolve.

4. O Soma, you rush while being purified in a stream and clothing yourself in the waters.
   Conferring treasure, you sit here upon the womb of truth as the golden wellspring, o god.
5. Milking the heavenly udder of his own dear honey, he has taken his ancient seat.
   The prizewinner rushes to the support worthy of the asking, the wide-gazing one rinsed by men.

6. O Soma, while being purified all around in the sheep's fleece, wakeful and dear,
   you became an inspired poet, the best of the Aṅgirases. Equip our sacrifice with honey.
7. Soma the rewarder purifies himself, the best pathfinder, the inspired, wide-gazing seer.
   You became the sage poet who best pursues the gods. You made the sun mount in heaven.

8. Soma, being pressed by the pressers upon the backs of the sheep,

drives with his stream as if with a golden horse, drives with his delighting stream.

9. Provided with cows he has flowed together with the cows at the water's edge; Soma has flowed together with those that have been milked.
   They have gone into the enclosures as if into the sea. The invigorating one wells out for exhilaration.

10. O Soma, while you are being pressed by the stones, (you come) here across the sheep's fleeces.
    Like a man into a fortress, the tawny one enters into the two cups. You have established your seat in the woods [/in the wooden cups].
11. He has become groomed across the fine (hairs) of the ewe, like a prize-seeking team at a competition.
    Self-purifying Soma is to be cheered on by those of inspired thought, by the inspired reciters of verses.

12. O Soma, like a river that has swollen with its flood, you have swollen forth with the milk of the plant to pursue the gods,
    wakeful like an exhilarating drink, toward the cask dripping with honey.
13. The delightful one has clothed himself in a silvery cloak, to be caressed like a dear son.
    The laborers propel him, in their two hands, as they would a chariot, into the rivers.

14. The soma juices, the Āyus, purify themselves into an exhilarating drink of exhilaration—
    they of inspired thought, bringing exhilaration and finding the sun, (purify themselves) upon the surface of the sea.
15. Purifying himself, he crosses the sea with his wave as king and god—and lofty truth—
    rushing according to the ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa, being propelled—the lofty truth,
16. Being guided by men, the delightful, wide-gazing king and god belonging to the sea.

17. Soma purifies himself as the exhilarating drink, pressed for Indra along with the Maruts.
    Possessed of a thousand streams he rushes beyond the sheep's fleece. The Āyus groom him.
18. Being purified in the cup, a poet begetting thought, Soma rejoices among the gods.
    Clothing himself in waters, he has wrapped himself with cows as the higher (oblation), sitting in the woods [/wooden cups].

19. O Soma, I rejoice in your fellowship (with me) every day, o drop.
    Many things, o brown one, get me down—way down. Go past these barriers.
20. Both by night and by day, Soma, I am at your udder for fellowship with you, o brown one.
    We have flown like birds far past the sun that scorches with its heat.

21. While being groomed, dexterous one, you impel your speech upon the sea.
    O self-purifying one, you rush toward ample, much-craved, golden wealth.
22. Being groomed, purifying yourself on the sheep's fleece, as bull you have roared down into the wood(en cup).
    O self-purifying Soma, you rush to the rendezvous with the gods, being anointed with cows.

23. Purify yourself to win the prize, (aiming) toward all products of poetic skill.
    Soma, you, the exhilarating one, were [/are] the first to spread out the sea for the gods.
24. Purify yourself all around the earthly realm and the heavenly ones, o Soma, in accordance with your ordinances.
    O wide-gazing one, the inspired poets propel you, resplendent, with their thoughts and insights.

25. Purifying themselves, they have been set loose across the filter in a steam—
    the exhilarating coursers, fit for Indra along with the Maruts, toward wisdom [/the ritual meal] and pleasing offerings.
26. Clothing himself in the waters, he rushes around the cask, the drop being propelled by the pressers.
    Begetting the light, he has made the delighting cows bellow, making the cows as if into his fresh garment.

IX.108 (820) Soma Pavamāna

Gaurivīti Śāktya 1–2, Śakti Vāsiṣṭha 3, 14–16, Ūru Āṅgirasa 4–5, R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja 6–7, Ūrdhvasadman Āṅgirasa 8–9, Kr̥tayaśas Āṅgirasa 10–11, R̥ṇaṃcaya 12–13
16 verses: kakubh alternating with satobr̥hatī, except gāyatrī yavamadhyā 13, arranged in pragāthas

The Anukramaṇī names seven different poets as authors of this hymn; the Anukramaṇī's divisions do not correspond at all to the clear pragātha structure, however, and therefore seem questionable. Within the pragāthas there is, more often

than not, syntactic dependency between verses (e.g., vss. 3–4, 7–8, 13–14), as well as some thematic continuity. Stylistically the hymn, especially toward the beginning, is characterized by rather choppy syntax and often presents itself as a mosaic of semi-self-contained phrases. On the other hand, there are signs of ring composition: the first phrase of the hymn, “purify yourself as the most honeyed for Indra, o Soma” recurs as the framing words of the first verse of the final pragātha (vs. 15), and the relative clause about the drinking of soma that introduces verse 2 is echoed, with the same relative pronoun, in 14a.

Allusions to the Vala myth are found in the interior of the hymn (vss. 4, 6). The heavenly soma, conceived of in part as rain, is also a prominent theme (vss. 9–11, and also probably vss. 4 [the “dear immortal one”] and 6 [the “watery” cows]). This cosmic soma is, as usual, a counterpoint to the ritual soma, the standard details of whose preparation are found throughout.

1. Purify yourself as the most honeyed for Indra, o Soma, as the exhilarating drink that best finds resolve,
greatly, as the exhilarating drink that best rules heaven,
2. Since, having drunk of you, the bull acts as a bull, at the drinking of this sun-finding (soma).
Bearing good marks he [=Soma] strode toward the refreshments, like Etaśa toward the prize.

3. O self-purifying one, it was certainly you as the most brilliant who made the heavenly races heed
for the sake of immortality,
4. With whom Navagva, with whom Dadhyañc uncloses (the cowpen), by whom the inspired poets have acquired for themselves
(some) of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma] in the grace of the gods, by whom they have each attained fame.

5. This most exhilarating one here, pressed in a stream, purifies himself with the fleeces of sheep,
playing like a wave of the waters,
6. He who with his might cut the ruddy, watery cows out from within the rock.
You have extended your control over the enclosure of the cows and horses. Like a man in armor, break into it, o bold one.

7. Press it, sprinkle it around, as one sprinkles a horse—(the soma that is stoma, i.e.,) the praise song that crosses the waters, crosses the airy realms,
that is howling in the wood and swimming in the waters,
8. The bull of a thousand streams, growing strong through the milk, dear to the divine race,
who born of truth through truth has grown strong as king, god, and lofty truth.

9. Illuminate lofty splendor and glory, o lord of refreshment, as you seek the gods, o god.
   Unleash the middle bucket [=rain cloud].
10. Coil yourself into the two cups when you are pressed, skillful one, as the clanlord of the clans, like a draft-horse.
   Purify yourself into the rain from heaven, the streaming of waters. Quicken our insights for the quest for cattle.

11. They have milked out of the heavens this thousand-streamed bull, who arouses exhilaration,
   who brings all good things.
12. The bull has been born, the immortal that gives birth, burning away the darkness with his light.
   Well-praised by the poets, he dons his raiment, a threefold one, by his wondrous ability.

13. He is pressed—who is the leader of goods, of riches, of Iḍā-offerings,
   Soma, who (is the leader) of good settlements,
14. Our (soma) of which Indra will drink, of which the Maruts, or Bhaga along with Aryaman,
   by whom we will bring Mitra and Varuṇa here and Indra here for great help.

15. For Indra to drink, o Soma—held by men, having good weapons and most exhilarating,
   purify yourself as the most honeyed.
16. Enter into the heart of Indra, the repository of soma, like rivers into the sea,
   being pleasing to Mitra, to Varuṇa, to Vāyu, the highest prop of heaven.

Hymns in Assorted Meters: 109–114

IX.109 (821) Soma Pavamāna

Dhiṣṇya Fires, descendants of Īśvara
22 verses: dvipadā virāj, arranged in tr̥cas

The Anukramaṇī's fanciful ascription of this hymn to the dhiṣṇya ("holy") fires finds no echo in the composition itself.

The lightness and brevity of this meter (each verse containing four pādas of a mere five syllables each) do not lend themselves to complex phraseology or

elaborate images. Instead the hymn consists primarily of standard apostrophes to Soma (e.g., the imperative "purify yourself" occurs five times in the hymn: vss. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10) and simple present-tense descriptions of the process of preparation (e.g., vs. 11 "they purify"; vs. 12 "they groom").

For links with the next hymn, see the introduction to IX.110.

1. Run forth and around for Indra, o Soma, sweet for Mitra, Pūṣan, and Bhaga.
2. Indra should drink of you, Soma, when you are pressed, for will and skill—and (so should) all the gods.
3. Thus, for immortality and for great peaceful dwelling, rush gleaming as the heavenly beestings.

4. Purify yourself, Soma, as the great sea and as the father of the gods, (going) to all domains.
5. Gleaming, purify yourself for the gods, o Soma, for heaven, for earth, and as weal for offspring.
6. You are the supporter of heaven, the gleaming beestings. In your real expansion, as prizewinner purify yourself.

7. Purify yourself, o Soma, possessing heavenly brilliance and good streams, along the (fleece) of the sheep as the great ancient one.
8. Being guided by men after being born purified, he streams all (goods) [/to all (domains)]—the gladdening one who finds the sun.
9. The drop being purified, being chosen, will make offspring and all goods for us.

10. Purify yourself, Soma, for will and skill, washed down like a prizewinning horse for the stake.
11. The pressers purify that sap of yours for exhilaration, the soma for great heavenly brilliance.
12. They groom the tawny child just born, the soma in the filter, the drop for the gods.

13. The dear drop has been purified for exhilaration in the lap of the waters, the sage poet (has been purified) for good fortune.
14. He bears the name dear to Indra, with which he smashes all obstacles.
15. All the gods drink of him, prepared with cows, pressed by men.

16. Being pressed, he has streamed forth in a thousand streams, across the filter, through the sheep's fleece.
17. The prizewinner has streamed in a thousand spurts, being groomed with waters, being prepared with cows.
18. O Soma, journey forth to the cheeks of Indra, being guided by men, pressed by stones.

19. The prizewinner has been let loose across the filter, Soma of a thousand streams, for Indra.
20. With the sap of honey they anoint him, the drop for Indra the bull, for exhilaration.
21. They groom you, the tawny one clothed in waters, for the gods, for (you to attain) your full dimension at will.

22. The drop spills, spills down for Indra—the mighty one preparing and setting the waters to flow.

IX.110 (822) Soma Pavamāna

Tryaruṇa and Trasadasyu
12 verses: pipīlikamadhyā 1–3, ūrdhvabṛhatī 4–9, virāj 10–12, arranged in tṛcas

This hymn is made up of verses in three rare meters; in fact verses 4–9 are the only ones in all of the Ṛgveda in this meter (consisting of verses of three pādas of twelve syllables each), and the first three verses are the only pipīlikamadhyā stanzas in the Ṛgveda with this syllable count (12 8 12). (The meter's name means "ant-middled," because a short pāda is sandwiched between two longer ones.) Despite the heterogeneity of the meters, there is evidence that the hymn is a conceptual unity, particularly in the signs of ring composition: the last two verses (11–12) echo the first two. "The one who gains the prize" (11c) matches "to gain the prize" in 1a; the two forms of the root *sah* "vanquish" in verse 12 (a and c) recall the "vanquisher" in 1b; the "difficult plunges" in 12b are the negative counterpart of Soma's plunge in 2c. Internally we may note that the begetting of the sun in verse 3, at the end of the first tṛca (3a, with its initial verb *ájījanaḥ*) is immediately reprised in 4a, in a new meter, again with the fronted verb *ájījanaḥ*.

The hymn also echoes some of the vocabulary and phraseology of the preceding hymn, X.109, whose metrical simplicity is in marked contrast to this hymn. Both hymns begin almost identically, though adjusted by the addition of particles for the metrical difference: IX.109.1a *pári prá dhanva* and 110.1a *páry ū ṣú prá dhanva*…, both meaning "run forth and around." The rare word *pīyū́ṣa* "beestings, first-milk," which makes two appearances in 109 (vss. 3, 6), recurs in 110.8, qualified as "the beestings of heaven" (*diváḥ pīyū́ṣam*) like the "heavenly beestings" of 109.3 (*divyáḥ pīyū́ṣaḥ*).

In content the first three and the last three (10–12) verses are fairly straightforward, and, especially the last three verses, are concerned with the earthly soma of the ritual, though also celebrating his great powers in confronting enemies and obstacles. A hint of the cosmic soma comes in verse 3, in the aforementioned begetting of the sun, though in this verse this action is linked with Soma's ritual progress. The middle six verses (4–9), in an otherwise unattested meter, are more difficult and treat the interaction and blurred boundaries between earthly, ritual soma and

cosmic soma. The gods' yearning for soma (see esp. vs. 6) and the primal preparation of soma (see esp. vss. 7–8) are described, and the final verse of this group (vs. 9) declares Soma's universal power.

1. Run forth and around to gain the prize, around as the vanquisher of obstacles.
   As the requiter of our debts, you speed [/are implored] to overcome hatreds.
2. Because we cheer you on, Soma, when you are pressed for the great (prize), in your kingship in the clash,
   you plunge forward toward the prizes, o self-purifying one.
3. For you have begotten the sun, o self-purifying one, in spreading your milk by your skill,
   hastening along with Plenitude, who is lively with cows.

4. You have begotten it, o immortal one, here among mortals, upon the foundation of the truth, of the dear immortal one [=heavenly soma].
   You have always flowed, ever streaming toward the prize.
5. Because with your fame you drilled ever closer to the inexhaustible drink for men, as if to some kind of wellspring,
   while being carried in the (priest's) hands, like (booty by someone) with arrows in his hands—
6. Because of that, seeing for themselves a friendship with him who is radiant with goods [=Soma], some heavenly beings roared to him.
   He uncovers the fleece as the god Savitar uncovers a desirable thing.

7. In you, Soma, those who first twisted the ritual grass placed their insight for the great prize of victory and for fame.
   Impel our (insight), o hero, for heroic power.
8. The ancient beestings of heaven, worthy of hymns—they milked that out of the great depth of heaven.
   They cried out in unison toward Indra as he was being born.
9. Now, o self-purifying one, in that (you) sur(mount) these two worlds here and all these creatures by your greatness,
   outstanding like a bull in the herd you extend yourself over them.

10. Self-purifying Soma, being purified in the sheep's fleece, has streamed, playing like a child—
    the drop possessing a thousand streams and a hundred prizes.
11. This one being purified, the honeyed and truth-possessing drop, the sweet wave, purifies himself for Indra—
    the one who gains the prize, finds wide space, and confers vitality.
12. Purify yourself, vanquishing the battlers, repelling demons and difficult plunges,
    having good weapons, having vanquished your rivals, Soma.

IX.111 (923) Soma Pavamāna

Anānata Pārucchepi
3 verses: atyaṣṭi

This hymn is the only one in the IXth Maṇḍala in the intricate atyaṣṭi meter, with its variable lines and patterned repetition. The poet, according to the Anukramaṇī, is Anānata son of Parucchepa, a poet not otherwise represented in the R̥gveda. However, his putative father, Parucchepa, is the author, again according to the Anukramaṇī, of I.127–39, the only sustained corpus of atyaṣṭi in the R̥gveda.

The hymn begins with a description of Soma's journey, and the final verse (vs. 3) returns to this theme. The middle verse (vs. 2) is a brief, and quite enigmatic, treatment of the Vala myth. In our view it involves something of a reversal of some standard tropes. The 2nd-person subject of the first three pādas of the verse is Soma, who is here credited with retrieving the cows stolen by the Paṇis. These cows, of course, also represent the milk with which the soma will be mixed. Soma then grooms or cleans these cows along with his (or their?) mothers. Now ordinarily it is Soma who is groomed; he doesn't perform any grooming on others. And a number of translators and commentators have attempted to make the verb used here (*marjayasi*) reflect this normal usage. However, this particular verb form is emphatically and unambiguously transitive, and it seems likely that the poet is thus drawing our attention to the role reversal, with the usual female agents of Soma's grooming relegated to auxiliaries.

The reference of the next item, the melody or sāman, is equally obscure. If it is part of the Vala myth, it may refer to the song sung by Indra/Br̥haspati and the Aṅgirases to open the cave and free the cows; they came "from afar" bringing their song, and to the cows within the cave the song would have sounded "from afar." It is also possible that the simile just refers to a general situation, the pleasure one gets from hearing a snatch of song out of nowhere. In any case in the last portion of this verse Soma acquires vigor or vitality from the cows, who are also identified as the three forms of ritual speech.

1. Being purified with this golden light, he crosses all hatreds with (horses) of his own yoking—like the Sun with the (horses) of his own yoking.
   In the stream of pressed (juice) he shines ruddy and tawny as he is being purified,
   when he makes the circuit of all his forms by (the impetus of) the versifiers—by (the impetus of) the versifiers with their seven mouths.
2. You found that good thing of the Paṇis [=herd of cows]. You groom (it), along with your mothers, in your own house—in your house through the insights of truth.
   Like a melody (heard) from afar, this is where the insights find pleasure.
   He has acquired vitality through the tripartite ruddy (cows)—shining, he has acquired vitality.

3. Following his earlier [/eastern] direction he drives, ever observant. He aligns himself with the reins [/(sun's) rays] as a chariot lovely to see—a heavenly chariot lovely to see.
   The hymns, the manly powers, have come: they excite Indra to victory,
   when you [=Soma] and his mace become unbudgeable—unbudgeable in battles.

The last three hymns in the IXth Maṇḍala share a refrain, are all in paṅkti meter, and can be safely considered supplements to the original book on the grounds of language and subject matter (see Oldenberg 1888: 202).

IX.112 (824) Soma Pavamāna

Śiśu Āṅgirasa
4 verses: paṅkti

This charming little hymn has no obvious connection to soma except through its refrain (which it shares with the next two hymn, 113–114, also in the same meter), which sits oddly in each verse, and through the glancing mention of the soma-presser in 1d. The diversity of people's occupations and of their goals is the theme, presented in casual style and sometimes colloquial language (see especially the designations for father and mother in vs. 3), with the gently cynical message that what everyone really wants is gain or an easy life. The final verse (4) opens out to the nonhuman world.

Perhaps the most interesting verse, as a small window on realia, is the second one, which presents a rare picture of a smith and his equipment. The "old plants" must be for producing a hot fire, the "feathers of birds" for fanning the flames, and the stones are probably whetstones.

Casting about for a reason for the refrain and for the inclusion of this hymn in the IXth Maṇḍala—it may be that the point of the refrain is that, like the people and animals mentioned in the body of the text, the drop has its own goal, particular to itself, namely simply to seek Indra. Or perhaps the hymn was simply too delightful to abandon.

1. Truly our thoughts are various, and the obligations of peoples are different:
   a carpenter seeks the broken, a healer the injured, a formulator a man who presses soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. With old [=dry] plants, with the feathers of birds,
   and with stones—throughout the days the smith seeks a man who has gold.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

3. I am a bard, Papa a healer, and Mama is pushing a pestle.
   Having varying thoughts but (all) seeking goods, we follow (goods)
   like cows.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. The draft-horse seeks an easy-rolling chariot, beguilers a joke;
   the penis seeks the hairy split, the frog just seeks water.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

IX.113 (825) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
11 verses: paṅkti

The special interest of this hymn rests in the vision of heaven in its second half. Most strikingly, the imagery that describes this heaven—its freedom, joy, and satisfaction of all desires—occurs again in the Upaniṣads to characterize the mystical realization of the self. The hymn begins more or less as a conventional soma hymn, however. In verse 1 Indra is urged to drink the soma to strengthen himself for action, and in verse 2 Soma is commanded to purify himself, with the signature imperative *pavasva*. Verse 2 also introduces the theme of true ritual speech, which is taken up again in verses 4–6. Verse 3 seems to contain an interlude about the rain, which provides the sap to the soma plant, though the mythological sequence involving the Daughter of the Sun and the Gandharvas is obscure.

Verses 6 and 7 are the omphalos verses and provide a dramatic transition from the poet's description of the preparation of soma in the first half of the hymn to a vision of heaven (vss. 7–11), where immortality and the fulfillment of all desires are attained. Verse 6 is still set on the ritual ground and is in some ways the climax of the hymn, for it anticipates the drinking of the soma. Since soma is the drink of deathlessness, the ceremony becomes the place of immortality. Verse 6 is also grammatically incomplete, consisting only of a dependent clause and producing tension awaiting resolution in a main clause that will answer the implicit question: "what will happen in this 'where'?" The first half of verse 7 is responsive to 6 and thus builds the tension, but the locus of the "where" has changed: the poet has transformed the ritual space into the heavenly realm. The tension finds its release in the second half of verse 7, with the long-postponed main clause. The remaining verses reproduce the structure of verse 7, enlarging and embellishing the vision of the immortal world.

What links the first half of the hymn to the second, besides the transformative responsion of verses 6–7? The answer is not entirely clear, but it seems that the true speech that accompanies the preparation of the soma (vs. 2), perhaps the natural speech of the thunder (vs. 3), the true speech Soma himself speaks (vs. 4), the sacred formulation with which he is purified (vs. 5), and the verbal behavior of

the formulator of that formulation (vs. 6) provide Soma with the power to bestow immortality. He does so by *placing* the poet in the immortal realms, and placing is also a recurrent theme in the first half of the hymn: Indra places soma's strength in himself in verse 1; the rain is placed in soma as his juice in verse 3; soma is prepared by the Placer in verse 4; the sun was placed in the heavenly world in 7b, and finally the poet implores Soma to place him in the same world in 7c. The first two of these placings also involve clear transformation of substance: soma becomes Indra's strength; the rain becomes soma's sap. We can also see transformation in the Placer's preparation of soma in verse 4, as this preparation makes a physical substance into a drink of immortality, and ultimately in Soma's placing of the poet in the immortal world, which will make the poet himself immortal. The command of the second half of verse 7 "place me in that immortal, imperishable world" is followed by the command refrain of the remaining four verses (8–11), "there make me immortal," a sequence that appears to support the notion that the "placing" both precedes and causes the poet's transformation.

1. Let Indra, Vr̥tra-smasher, drink the soma in the reed-filled (place),
   placing strength in himself as he is about to perform a great heroic deed.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. Purify yourself, o master of the directions, o munificent Soma, from the foamy (place).
   With real words of truth, with trust, and with fervor are you pressed.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
3. The buffalo grown strong through Parjanya [=thunder]—him [=rain] the Daughter of the Sun brought,
   him the Gandharvas received, him they placed as the juice in the soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. Speaking the truth, you whose brilliance is the truth, speaking what is real, you whose actions are real,
   speaking your trust, King Soma, you are prepared by the Placer, o Soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
5. Of (you) who are lofty and really strong the joint streams stream jointly.
   The juices of (you) who are rich in juice join together as (you) are being purified by the sacred formulation, tawny one.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
6. Where, o self-purifying one, the formulator, speaking metrical speech
   along with the pressing stone, makes himself great on soma, generating joy with soma—
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
7. Where the inexhaustible light is, in which world the sun is placed,
   in that one place me, o self-purifying one, in the immortal, imperishable world.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

8. Where the son of Vivasvant is king, where there is a ladder down from heaven,
   where those youthfully exuberant waters are, there make me immortal.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
9. Where one can move following one's desire in the three-vaulted, three-heavened (place) of heaven,
   where there are worlds filled with light, there make me immortal.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
10. Where there are desires and yearnings, where the upper surface of the coppery one [=Sun and soma?] is,
    where there is independence and satisfaction, there make me immortal.
    – O drop, flow around for Indra.
11. Where joys and delights, elations and exaltations dwell,
    where the desires of desire are obtained, there make me immortal.
    – O drop, flow around for Indra.

IX.114 (826) Soma Pavamāna

Kaśyapa Mārīca
4 verses: paṅkti

This final hymn in the Soma Maṇḍala has the feeling of an afterthought. The seer addresses himself in verse 2, and the fortunate ritualist depicted in verse 1 is most likely Kaśyapa as well. In verse 3 he produces a triad of heptads, which have little to do with his call to Soma to protect us (3d). The final verse (4) repeats this call and enlarges on the dangers we wish to avoid.

1. The one who has stridden along the domains of the self-purifying drop,
   of him they say "(he will) have good offspring"—the one who has dedicated his thought to you, Soma.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
2. O seer Kaśyapa, strengthening up your songs with the praises of the mantra-makers,
   do homage to Soma the king, who was born as the lord of plants.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
3. Seven are the quarters, each with its separate sun; seven are the Hotars sacrificing in due order.
   The Āditya gods, who are seven—with them, o Soma, protect us.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.
4. The oblation that is readied for you, o king—with that, o Soma, protect us.
   Let no hostile man overcome us, and let nothing whatsoever afflict us.
   – O drop, flow around for Indra.

X

Maṇḍala X

The Xth maṇḍala consists of 191 hymns like Maṇḍala I, but it has a more miscellaneous character and looser organization than its twin. As a whole, X was certainly the final addition to the codified Ṛgveda, and it contains many hymns with younger linguistic features and "popular" themes, or at least subjects that were not central to the soma sacrifice that dominates the rest of the Ṛgveda and determines the choice of hymns to be included or excluded in the rest of the text. These include life-cycle rituals like the funeral and the wedding, meta-reflections on the sacrifice and its parts, additional mythological material, celebrations of deities and divine forces peripheral to the soma sacrifice, dramatic monologues and dialogues, healing spells and curses, and so forth. However, it is easy to overemphasize the special character of X, for, when compared even with the chronologically close Atharvaveda, the intricate, playful, and allusive style, the lexicon, and the complex development of themes of most of X are quite distinctively Ṛgvedic.

Approximately half the maṇḍala is organized into collections generally attributed to individual poets. The first few of these collections are comparable in number of hymns to those in I, but starting with X.61 the hymns are arranged first in pairs (61–84) and then, beginning with X.85, as individual hymns.

This maṇḍala contains too many striking hymns, famous or unsung, to list here. The reader is referred to the introductions to the individual collections and hymns.

The first nine hymns of Maṇḍala X are assigned to two different poets: Trita Āptya 1–7 and Triśiras Tvāṣṭra ("Three-Headed Son of Tvaṣṭar") 8–9. Both of these are mythological figures, who appear as opponents in the same myth, which is narrated briefly at the end of X.8. Although the poets' names were generated from the mythological material and therefore do not reflect "real" poets, it is clear from their narrative connection that the hymns belong together (Oldenberg 1888: 232–35).

All of the Trita Āptya hymns (1–7) and the first two-thirds of X.8 are dedicated to Agni. The last three verses of X.8 (7–9), where the myth of the confrontation of Trita Āptya and his three-headed opponent is narrated, is assigned to Indra by the Anukramaṇī. The final hymn (X.9) is to the Waters.

X.1 (827) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

An appropriate beginning to an Agni cycle, this hymn recounts the birth of the ritual fire at dawn—the word *jātá* "at birth, once born" is repeated four times in the hymn (vss. 1–3, 6). But this nascent fire is endowed with cosmic importance, identified as the embryo of the two worlds (vs. 2) and compared to Viṣṇu in his lofty reach (vs. 3ab). The role of his hymnists is also given its due (3cd), and Agni's pivotal priestly role in the sacrifice is emphasized as the hymn continues (vss. 5cd–7). In the final verse (7) Agni is sent forth to bring the gods to the ritual ground, where the sacrifice can begin.

1. At the forefront of the dawns he has stood upright on high. Having gone out from darkness, he has come here with light.
   With his luminous beam, Agni, beautiful of limb, has filled all the seats at his birth.
2. At your birth you are the embryo of the two world-halves, o Agni, the beloved one dispersed among the plants.
   A brilliant babe, circling around the dark shades and the nights, you have come forth from your mothers, constantly roaring.
3. In just such a way as Viṣṇu, knowing his farthest (step), at his birth he protects on high the third (seat?).
   When with their mouth they have made their own milk [=poetry] for him, they with single mind chant to him here.
4. And then your birth-givers [=kindling wood], bringing nurture, proceed toward you, who are strengthened by food, with food;
   you go toward them in turn as they (acquire) other forms [=burn]. You are the Hotar among the clans of Manu.
5. (They chant) to the Hotar of the rite, possessing a brilliant chariot, the luminous beacon of every sacrifice,
   to Agni, who is the half-sharer with every god in his greatness, but in his beauty the guest of the peoples.
6. Agni, donning garments and ornaments on the navel of earth,
   ruddy at birth in the footprint of the refreshment—when set in front, o king, sacrifice to the gods here.
7. Because you have ever extended through heaven and earth, Agni, as a son extends both his parents,
   drive forth to those eager ones and convey the gods here, o youngest powerful one.

X.2 (828) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The most salient characteristic of the hymn is its concern with the ritual sequence (*ṛtú*) and with Agni as the god who ensures that these sequences are properly arranged and performed. In this feature it reminds us of the hymns devoted to the *ṛtugraha*s (the offering of "sequential cups" to an ordered set of divinities by an ordered series of priests); see I.15 and II.36–37. Although our hymn has much in common with those hymns, it does not provide the complete series, as those hymns do. Instead it focuses on Agni as the Hotar and the central figure in the sacrificial program—the senior partner, as it were, in the ritual enterprise involving both Agni and mortals as officiants. Agni's most important quality in this hymn is knowledge: he is called *vidvā́n* (or *pravidvā́n*) "knowing" four times in the hymn (vss. 1, 3, 4, 7), and "discerning" (*vijānán*) once (vs. 5). The epithet we have translated as "Establisher of Thought" in verse 2 (*mandhātár*) probably also participates in this theme, since it is etymologically almost identical to the name of the chief divinity in the Old Iranian pantheon, Ahura *Mazdā*, "Lord *Wisdom*" (< Proto Indo-Iranian **mn̥s-dhaH*). Mortals, by contrast, are very *un*-knowing (*áviduṣṭara*, vs. 4) and prone to moral and ritual mistakes (vss. 4–5).

Less prominent in the hymn, but noteworthy because of the importance of this theme later in the Xth Maṇḍala, is the distinction between the path going to the gods (vs. 3) and that to the forefathers (vs. 7), which figures prominently in the funeral hymns (X.14–18).

1. Please the gods, who are eager for it, o youngest one. Knowing the ritual sequences, o lord of the sequences, perform the sacrifice here.
   Those divine sequential-sacrificers—along with them, o Agni, you are the best sacrificer among the Hotars.
2. Pursue the office of Hotar and of Potar of the peoples. You are the Establisher of Thought and the Giver of Wealth, possessing the truth.
   (When) at the *svāhā*-call we shall make the oblations, let Agni the god sacrifice to the gods, (himself) deserving it.
3. We have come along the path of the gods, to carry forward along it what we can.
   Agni is the one who knows: he will perform the sacrifice; just he is the Hotar. He will arrange the rites, he the ritual sequences.
4. If we shall confound the commandments of you who know, o gods—we who are so very unknowing—
   knowing Agni fulfills all this through the ritual sequences by which he will arrange the gods.

5. If, naively in their thinking and scant in skill, mortals do not pay heed to the sacrifice,
   discerning Agni, the Hotar, finding the resolve, will sacrifice to the gods as best sacrificer according to the ritual sequence.
6. Because the begetter has begotten you as the face of all the rites, their brilliant beacon,
   so win by sacrifice, throughout the lands filled with superior men, eagerly sought cattle-rich refreshments belonging to all peoples.
7. You whom Heaven and Earth, you whom the waters, you whom Tvaṣṭar, the good begetter, has begotten,
   you, knowing the way along the path leading to the forefathers—once kindled, beam brilliantly in all directions, o Agni.

X.3 (829) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The very moment of transition from night to dawn is the event celebrated in this hymn—the time when the ritual fire is kindled. Agni's triumph over Night, a female, and his welcoming of Dawn, likewise a female, are the subjects of the first three verses, and the whole hymn is pervaded by Agni's wide shining and the many words that express his radiance and brightness.

The poet is also fond of synesthetic images, as when his journeys "kindle" calls in verse 4, or his beams "purify themselves" (the signature verb of the soma drinks) like sounds (probably of soma as well) in verse 5. The poet's pet word for Agni, *aratí* "spoked wheel" (vss. 1, 2, 6, and 7), presumably originally referring to the shape of the fireplace, prompts a number of chariot and journey images through the hymn (vss. 4, 6, 7).

1. The powerful spoked wheel, now kindled, has appeared, to exercise his skill—he who is Rudra-wild but of easy birth, o king.
   Observant, he beams widely with his lofty beam. Driving away black (Night), he comes to luminous (Dawn).
2. When with his form he has prevailed over black, mottled (Night), begetting the young woman [=Dawn], the child of a lofty father [=Heaven],
   propping upright the radiance of the sun, the spoked wheel of heaven beams widely with the Vasus.
3. The auspicious male [=Sun], in company with the auspicious female [=Dawn], has come here. As her lover, he approaches his sister from behind.

Through the days with their good portents, Agni, spreading out, has prevailed over the night with his luminous colors.

4. Of this one here—of Agni, our kindly companion—his journeys are, as it were, kindling the calls of the lofty one [=pressing stone?];
   on the journey of the lofty bull worthy to be invoked, the nights appear as his own beams.
5. Whose beams, like the sounds (of soma?), purify themselves when the lofty one, bringing the good day, is shining—
   he who reaches heaven with his most eminent, sharpest, playful, highest radiant beams.
6. His snortings resound when he, his wheel-rim visible, is panting along with his teams—
   he who, the best of gods, the spoked wheel of wide extent, beams widely with his age-old, luminous, crackling (flames).
7. Convey here something great for us and take your seat here as the spoked wheel of Heaven and Earth, the two youthful ones.
   May Agni, powerfully thrusting, with his powerfully thrusting horses, the tempestuous one with his tempestuous ones, come here.

X.4 (830) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The usual high points of the birth and growth of Agni are covered in this hymn. What gives the hymn its character are the concentrated and somewhat unusual images that are studded through it. This is already evident in verse 1, where Agni (who is fire, after all) is compared to "the first drink in a wasteland"; presumably the point of comparison is that both are eagerly desired and it is not certain they will appear. A series of similes involving domestic animals follow in verses 2–3, while verses 4–6 concern the firewood that covers the nascent fire and that it begins to consume. The most elaborate and surprising image is found in verse 6, where the two arms of the priest who is tending the fire are compared to two thieves entering the woods, risking their lives. "Going into the woods" must refer to the manipulation of the firewood; the "risk" must be that of being burned. But why "thieves"? Most commentators think that the thieves are entering the wood to attack travelers and tie them up with cords—the ten cords compared to the priest's ten fingers. Perhaps, but the image is the more resonant for not being entirely transparent.

1. I begin the sacrifice to you and I propel my thought to you, so that you will become the one to be extolled at our invocations.
   You are like the first drink in a wasteland, o Agni, for Pūru who seeks to attain (you), you age-old king.

2. You, upon whom the peoples converge like cows on a warm pen, o youngest one,
   you are the messenger of gods and of mortals. A great one, you act the go-between through the luminous realm.
3. Raising you like a thoroughbred foal, your mother carries you, seeking your joint delight.
   From the high plain you drive eagerly along the slope. Like a herd animal set loose, you are seeking to gain your livelihood.
4. We fools do not (know) your greatness, o you who are no fool; but, observant Agni, you surely know it.
   His covering [=wood] lies still; he moves, eating it with his tongue. The clanlord licks the young woman [=offering ladle] again and again.
5. Wherever it may be, he is born anew among the old ones. He stands in the wood—a grey one with a banner of smoke.
   Although no swimmer, he pursues the waters like a bull—he whom the mortals, of one mind, lead forward.
6. Like thieves who go into the woods risking their lives, the two (arms) have harnessed (the firewood? Agni?) with ten cords [=fingers].
   Here for you, Agni, is a newer inspired thought: hitch it up like a chariot with your blazing limbs.
7. Sacred formulation and homage and this song here shall always be strengthening for you, o Jātavedas.
   Guard our progeny and posterity, o Agni, and guard our own bodies unremittingly.

X.5 (831) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

A mystical and enigmatic hymn, with a number of conceptual and phraseological connections with other such hymns in the R̥gveda. There are numerous conflicting interpretations of this hymn, not surprisingly. We will just present our own, with all due caution. In our view the standard theme of the birth of Agni/the ritual fire, its growing strength, and the rise of its flames and smoke to heaven is grafted onto a treatment of the mysteries of creation and a claim that poets (or, to be more explicit, “sage poets,” *kaví*) have special access to these mysteries and indeed anticipate and direct the natural processes.

We should start by noting that the name Agni occurs only once in the hymn, at the beginning of the last half-verse (7c), though he is present in every verse. The hymn begins with a reference to the sea, but various parallels make it clear that this “sea” is really the sea in our heart and the source of poetic insight. The poet claims that this sea is a single entity, but that Agni, who has many births, emerges

from it. Already the poet is establishing the priority of poetry over even the god Agni and the ritual he represents. Pāda c seems to describe the birth of Agni from the kindling sticks (or possibly also the two world-halves, or night and day). His later journey to heaven is anticipated by his identification with a bird in pāda d.

In verse 2 the bullish buffaloes in the same nest and the mares with which they unite are presumably the flames of the fire, mingling and twisting in the fireplace. The birth of the fire is further described in verse 3, where again the two parents referred to are probably the kindling sticks but may also represent cosmic pairings. The cosmic aspect becomes clear in verse 4, where the fire rises between the two world-halves, which nourish it. The fire rises in the midspace with its flames in verse 5, while in verse 6 it is pictured as a pillar stretching to very highest heaven. Verse 6 reprises some of the vocabulary of the beginning of the hymn: the foundation (*dharúṇa*) of verse 1 and the nest (*nīḍá*) of verse 2 and thus transports the original earthly birthplace of fire to a new location.

The final verse (7) connects this heavenward journey of the fire [/Agni] with the issue of creation. The paradoxical phrase "both the nonexistent and the existent" that famously begins the creation hymn X.129 is a signal that the undifferentiated mass of matter (for want of a better word) that precedes real creation is present in the highest heaven where the male Dakṣa, the "skillful one" (in this case identified with Agni), and the female Aditi, the pair that set the processes of creation into motion in another famous creation hymn (X.72; see esp. vss. 4–5), are born. Agni is also identified with the androgynous bovine (both bull and milk-cow) that presides over creation in another treatment thereof (III.38; see esp. vs. 7). Thus "our" just-born ritual fire is identified as both the first created thing and the creator itself, and ritual time, as so often, recapitulates cosmic time.

We have not yet said anything about the poets' role, beyond noting the assertion of priority in verse 1. In verses 2–3 the poets oversee "the track of truth" and control the thread that others (priests? gods?) are pursuing; we interpret this to mean that the poets are directing or at least keeping safe the cosmic progress of the fire (see the trails in vs. 4), and in verse 6 it is the poets who establish the boundaries that define its journey. Also in verse 2 they anticipate the endpoint of the fire's journey by setting in a secret place "the highest names." Since creation is generally viewed as the differentiation of the mass mentioned above into individual entities with "name and form," the poets' control of the hidden names in verse 2 signals their participation in the creative process.

There is much that remains unclear in this hymn, particularly the seven boundaries in verse 6. But the connection between the birth of the ritual fire and the Ur-creation, mediated by the poets, seems to be the conceptual focus of this hymn.

1. The sea is (just) one, the foundation of riches, but he, having many births,
   gazes out from us, from our heart.
   He attends upon the udder in the lap of the two that are hidden. The
   track of the bird has been set down in the middle of the wellspring.

2. Cloaking themselves [/dwelling] in the same nest, the bullish buffaloes have united with the mares.
   The sage poets protect the track of truth: they have placed in hiding the highest names.
3. The two possessing both truth and magical power have conjoined with one another. Having given him his measure, they have given birth to the babe, making him grow—
   him who is the navel of everything, both the moving and the fixed. They [=gods? priests?] with their mind are also pursuing the thread of the poet,
4. For the trails of truth (follow) the well-born one, and refreshments follow (him) from of old for the prize.
   The two world-halves, having cloaked themselves in their over-cloak, have strengthened (their own child) with ghee-drops and foods of honey.
5. Having bellowed [/being eager], the knowing one has carried up the seven ruddy sisters from the honey, to be seen.
   He held them, born earlier, within the midspace. Seeking a covering, he has found the one belonging to Pūṣana.
6. The sage poets have fashioned seven boundaries. To just one of these has the narrow one gone.
   The pillar stands on its foundations in the nest of the highest Āyu where the paths give out.
7. Both the nonexistent and the existent are in the highest heaven, at the birth of the skillful one in the lap of Aditi.
   Agni is for us the first-born of truth, both a bull and a milk-cow in his previous lifetime.

X.6 (832) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

After the enigmas of the preceding hymn, the relative simplicity of this one comes as some relief. It begins with an annunciatory "here he is," and the remainder of the first three verses consists of relative clauses describing Agni. Relative clauses also dominate verses 5–6. The contents are fairly standard: Agni's radiance (esp. vss. 1–2), his role in the sacrifice and his reciprocal relationship with the poet and priest (vss. 3–5), and prayers for Agni's intervention in bringing help and other good things to us (vss. 6–7). These last two verses address Agni directly; in the first five verses he appears only in the 3rd person. Unlike the last hymn, in which the word *agní* appeared only in the last half-verse, this hymn contains a form of the name in every verse.

1. Here he is—Agni, in whose protection, in whose charge, and by whose help the singer thrives—
   the far-radiant one who circles around, encircled by the peerless radiant beams of the dawn rays;
2. The far-radiant one who beams afar with his radiant beams together with the gods—truthful, untiring Agni—
   who has pursued comradeship for his comrades, undeviating like a teamed steed;
3. Who has control of every effort to pursue the gods and has control of the dawn at its dawning throughout a full lifetime;
   Agni, upon whom a man possessing an invulnerable chariot [=sacrifice] props his oblations zealously with fortifying (hymns).
4. Grown strong with the fortifying (hymns) and being delighted by the chants, with swift flight he goes to the gods.
   As the gladdening, best-sacrificing Hotar, with his tongue Agni sprinkles the gods, mingling together (with them).
5. With hymns and reverent gestures attract him here at dawn like Indra—quivering Agni,
   whom the inspired poets hymn with their thoughts—Jātavedas, the tongue of the overpowering (gods).
6. You in whom all good things have joined together, like horses forming a team at a contest in their own way—
   o Agni, attract here, near to us, the forms of help most cherished by Indra.
7. Then, o Agni, because, having sat down with greatness, immediately on being born you became the one to be invoked,
   the gods followed your will. Then the foremost helpers became strong.

X.7 (833) Agni

Trita Āptya
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This last of the Trita Āptya hymns is not particularly noteworthy, though it shows some affinities with hymns earlier in the Trita Āptya sequence. Verses 5–6 point to Agni's role as "seasonal sacrificer" (*ṛtv-íj*), a role explored in X.2. Agni's supreme competence as a sacrificer is contrasted with the potential incompetence of the mortal sacrificer in verse 4, as in X.2.5. Otherwise the hymn seems primarily concerned with the material gain that will come to the mortal sacrificer for his ritual efforts (see esp. vss. 1d, 2, 4, and 7).

1. Provide well-being to us from heaven and from earth, (for us) to sacrifice for a full lifetime, o god Agni.

Might we be accompanied by your visible signs, o wondrous one. Make wide space for us in exchange for our wide lauds, o god.

2. These thoughts were born for you, o Agni. They applaud your generosity with its cows and horses,
   when the mortal has attained the benefit from you, acquiring it by (these) thoughts, o well-born good one.
3. I consider Agni our father, Agni our friend, Agni our brother and our comrade forever.
   I do honor to the face of lofty Agni, the worshipful luminous (face) of the Sun in heaven.
4. Our insights are effective and bring gain to us, o Agni. Whomever you, as his own Hotar, safeguard in his house,
   (let) that truthful one (be) possessed of chestnut horses and much livestock; for him let there be treasure throughout the days and daytimes.
5. To the one established throughout the days like an ally for the harnessing, the ancient sequential-sacrificer and lover of the rite,
   to Agni did the Āyus give birth with their arms and install among the clans as their Hotar.
6. Perform sacrifice by yourself to the gods in heaven, o god. How can a callow man without discernment do it for you?
   Just as you sacrificed to the gods, o god, according to the ritual sequences, so perform sacrifice to your own body, o well-born one.
7. Become our helper, Agni, and our herdsman; become the creator of vitality and the provider of vitality for us.
   And grant to us the giving of oblations, o very great one, and safeguard our bodies unremittingly.

X.8 (834) Agni (1–6), Indra (7–9)

Triśiras Tvāṣṭra
9 verses: triṣṭubh

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn, along with the following one (X.9 to the Waters), to a different poet from the first seven Agni hymns of the maṇḍala, which are attributed to Trita Āptya, it is fairly clear that these nine hymns belong together, on the basis of criteria like shared phraseology, as well as larger structural considerations. (See Oldenberg 1888: 233–34.) The poet of X.8–9 is given as Triśiras Tvāṣṭra, a speaking name: "Three-Headed Son of Tvaṣṭar" and a figure who is the mythological enemy of Trita. Thus, as Oldenberg saw, the two poets to whom this sequence of nine hymns is ascribed are narratively linked, and both names were probably assigned as poets to these hymns because of the mythological narrative sketched in this particular hymn.

Trita's defeat of his three-headed foe, also known as Viśvarūpa ("having all forms"), is treated in the last three verses of our hymn (7–9). The myth goes back to Indo-Iranian times in one form or other. In the Younger Avestan Hom Yašt (Yasna 9–11), Zarathushtra asks the Haoma (= Skt. Soma) the names and stories of the men who first pressed him. In Y 9.7–8 Haoma names a certain Āϑβiia (note the similarity to, but not identity with, Āpt(i)ya) as the second man to press him, whose son, Θraētaona, smote a mighty serpent-dragon (Aži Dahāka; cf. the Sanskrit cognate *áhi* "serpent" frequently used of Vr̥tra) with three heads (*ϑrikamərəδa*; cf. *mūrdhán* "head" in vss. 3 and 6 of this hymn). Immediately thereafter (Y 9.10–11) he identifies Θrita (= Skt. Trita) as his third presser, one of whose sons defeats another formidable dragon (also *aži*) in a particularly imaginative fashion. The names Āϑβiia and Θrita, though differently distributed, and the three-headed monster speak strongly for the kinship of the two myths, though they are not identical in all their features.

What is not clear is why this little mythic vignette has been appended at the end of this Agni cycle, though we will suggest some reasons at the end of the introduction. Here and elsewhere in Vedic the story of Trita Āptya's slaying of three-headed Viśvarūpa is associated with Indra (even in this hymn; see vss. 8–9), not Agni, and it is assimilated in several ways to the better-known Vala myth—generally an Indra myth. First, Trita Āptya begins his quest in a cave or hole of some sort (vs. 7a), and the happy result of the defeat of Viśvarūpa is the release of his cows (vss. 8–9)—just as the cows confined in the Vala cave are released at the end of that myth. Moreover, the "familial" (vs. 7) or "ancestral" (vs. 8) weapons Trita employs in the fight appear to be mental and verbal (see especially the "visionary thought" he seeks in 7b and his "speaking" his weapons in 7d). In the Vala myth Indra and his helpers, the Aṅgirases, break open the cave with verbal spells, not physical weapons. Since the corresponding Avestan version does not have these elements, it is likely that these Vala-like features were grafted onto the inherited myth, whose popularity was perhaps waning in R̥gvedic times. (It does have a robust revival in Vedic prose.)

The first few verses of the hymn for the most part contain standard Agni fare, though with a cosmic dimension. The fire, conceived of also as a powerful male animal, reaches through the worlds to heaven itself (vs. 1), just after it is born (vs. 2). His birth and installation are further treated in verse 3, where the ritual references probably also have cosmic referents. The hymn begins to take an odd turn in verse 4. In that verse Agni "sets seven steps," thereby "begetting an alliance (or, the god Mitra)." The seven-step reference is to the culminating ritual action particularly of the marriage ceremony, after which the marriage is irrevocable, when the bride and groom take seven steps together; other alliances can be assimilated to the marriage alliance by the performance of the seven steps (see Jamison 1996a: 120–23). These seven steps are always taken beside the ritual fire, and as Proferes (2007) has discussed at length (on this particular passage, see p. 61), the fire is also a symbol of the alliances made by social groups. Through those alliances the fire itself is strengthened and increased, hence the "for the sake of your own body" in this verse. The reason for this intrusion of the social world at this point in the hymn is unclear,

since heretofore the focus has been entirely on Agni. In the following verses (5–6) Agni is identified with, or transformed into, a series of divinities and functional roles. Perhaps these identifications were suggested by the alliance generated in verse 4, representing the web of associations in which Agni participates.

The six Agni verses end with Agni setting his head (*mūrdhán*) in heaven. As noted above, the hymn in fact contains two occurrences of *mūrdhán* (vss. 3, 6), and its Avestan cognate *kamərəδan* (with pejorative *ka*-prefix), in the bahuvrīhi *θri-kamərəδa* "having three heads," qualifies the monster killed by Āϑβiia's son. The corresponding form in the Trita myth in this hymn has a different word for head, *-śíras-* (acc. sg. m. *tri-śīrṣā́ṇam*, vs. 8). However, the R̥gveda does contain an occurrence of *tri-mūrdhán*—but referring to Agni, in the phrase *trimūrdhā́naṃ saptáraśmim* "having three heads and seven reins" (I.146.1). The three heads are most likely the three ritual fires, the seven reins possibly the seven priests, but the important thing is that this same phrase, "having three heads and seven reins," is found in our hymn X.8, describing the enemy Viśvarūpa (8c). This, we would submit, is the initial point of contact between this Agni hymn and the Trita saga appended to it: the old Indo-Iranian myth used the word **tri-mr̥Hdhan* for the three-headed beast. But the epithet can also be used positively as a descriptor of Agni with his three representative fires on the ritual ground. The poet is playing with the delicious positive/negative polarities of the epithet, and signals the connection between the Agni portion of the hymn and the little Trita myth by using the word originally used of the monster, *mūrdhán*, elsewhere in the hymn.

But there may be another connection. As we noted, Agni undergoes several transformations in the last verses of his section of the hymn. And it is quite possible that verse 7 is suggesting yet another transformation, into Trita or "the third (fire)," being born in the fireplace, seeking poetic vision and ritual release. Agni sometimes seems to be called Trita (see esp. X.46.3, 6), and the Trita/Viśvarūpa story may be introduced here via a modulation through Agni identified with Trita.

1. With his lofty beacon Agni drives forth; the bull keeps bellowing to the two world-halves.
   He has reached up even to the farthest ends of heaven; the buffalo has grown strong in the lap of the waters.
2. He rejoices as an embryo, as a hump-backed bull. No miscarriage, the calf has bellowed vehemently.
   Causing (the oblations) to be lifted up to the conclave of gods, he goes first within his own dwelling places.
3. He who has seized the head of his two parents [=Heaven and Earth? kindling sticks?], (him) they [=priests] have set down at the rite as the sun's undulating flood.
   At his flight the ruddy females [=flames? dawns?] with the horse [=fire?] as their foundation find pleasure in their own bodies within the womb of truth.

4. Because you go at the forefront of every dawn, o good one, you have become the far-radiant one at (the time of) the twins [=Night and Dawn?].
   For truth you have set your seven steps, begetting an alliance [/Mitra] for the sake of your own body.
5. You become the eye and herdsman of great truth; you become Varuṇa when you pursue (your tasks) for truth.
   You become the Child of the Waters, o Jātavedas; you become the messenger of him in whose oblation you will take pleasure.
6. You become the leader of the sacrifice and of airy space, where you are accompanied your kindly teams of horses.
   In heaven you have set your head, which wins the sun, and you have made your tongue to be the conveyor of oblations, o Agni.
7. With his resolve, Trita [/the "third" fire], within a cave [/cover]—seeking a visionary thought according to the ways of his distant forefather,
   longing for companionship in the lap of his parents, speaking his own familial weapons—pursues (his tasks).
8. That one, Āptya, knowing his ancestral weapons, urged on by Indra, attacked.
   Having smashed the three-headed, seven-reined (monster), Trita let loose the cows, even those of Tvaṣṭar's son.
9. Indra split (the heads) off the one trying to reach up to much power—the lord of settlements (split them off) the one who thought himself (the same).
   Having made the cows of Viśvarūpa, the son of Tvaṣṭar, his own, he twisted off his three heads.

X.9 (835) Waters

Triśiras Tvāṣṭra or Sindhudvīpa Āmbarīṣa
9 verses: gāyatrī, except triṣṭubh 8–9

The last four verses of this hymn (6–9) are identical with I.23.20–23 (save for the absence of I.23.20d) and treat the healing and expiatory properties of the Waters, who provide healing remedies (vss. 6–7) while also carrying away the detritus of moral misbehavior (vs. 8). The paradox of "fire in the waters" (as embodied elsewhere in the figure of Apām Napat "Child of the Waters," identified with Agni) is also alluded to in verses 6 and 8. The healing and life-giving qualities of the Waters are also found in the two preceding verses (4–5).

The first three verses of the hymn stand somewhat apart from the remainder of the hymn and progress from the bland and generic to a rather surprising conclusion. Verse 1 simply describes the Waters as refreshing and asks them for nourishment

and happiness. In verse 2 the refreshment is specified as juice or sap (*rása*) and implicitly compared to breast milk, since the Waters themselves are compared to mothers. And then there is the very puzzling verse 3, which can only be understood as an enlargement of that simile, for it is said that the Waters "animate and beget us." But even more puzzling than their apparent role in giving birth to "us" is their purpose in so doing: so that we will go to be "fit" for the dwelling of an unidentified third party. This third party is generally assumed, most likely correctly, to be the patron of the sacrifice, and the poet/sacrificer calls upon the Waters to (re)vivify him, send him to the house of the patron, and make him fit to render service to this patron in the form of hymns and ritual labor—but the stark economy with which this sentiment is expressed challenges the modern interpreter.

1. Since you Waters are sheer refreshment, so destine us for nourishment
   and to see great happiness.
2. Your most beneficent juice—make us have a share in that here,
   like eager mothers (their milk).
3. Let us, as your (offspring), go to be fit for him for whose peaceful
   dwelling you animate
   and beget us, o Waters.
4. Let the goddesses, the Waters, be luck for us to prevail, for us to drink.
   Let them flow to us for luck and life.
5. Those who are mistresses of things of value, ruling over the settled
   domains,
   the Waters do I beseech for a healing remedy.
6. "Within the waters," Soma said to me, "are all healing remedies
   and Agni who is weal to all."
7. O Waters, fully grant healing and protection for my body
   and (for me) to see the sun for a long time.
8. O Waters, carry this away, whatever trouble is in me—
   whether I have committed deceit or I have cursed—as well as untruth.
9. O Waters, today I have followed (you). We have united with your sap.
   Full of milk, o Agni, come here. Merge me with luster.

The next ten hymns (X.10–19) form a Yama cycle, though the subject matter found in the individual hymns is quite various. Yama, the son of Vivasvant, is king of the land of the dead because he was the first mortal to die. Yet he was apparently born immortal (see esp. I.83.5) and chose to become mortal, subject to death, "for the sake of the gods . . . and for the sake of offspring" (X.13.4). The opening hymn in the cycle, the dialogue of Yama and his twin sister Yamī, on the fraught topic of embarking on incestuous sex in order to produce offspring, addresses Yama's change of status and his choice, but in a deliberately oblique and misleading fashion, as Yama spurns the sexual advances of his sister, and at the end of their bitter argument there seems little likelihood of children.

The last six hymns in this cycle (X.14–19) are collectively known as funeral hymns. The first, X.14, is devoted especially to Yama in his role as king of the realm of the dead, while the others, especially 15–18, concern various aspects of death and the treatment of the dead—for example, the forefathers who preceded us to Yama's realm in X.15, the cremation fire in X.16, the funeral itself in X.18. The intermediate hymns, X.11–13, have less superficially clear connections to the Yama saga, but both X.12 (vss. 6–7) and X.13 (vss. 4–5) make important comments on Yama and on Yama's choice.

There is also an underlying unifying theme, that of duality and twinned-ness: the absolute disjunction between and the ultimate complementarity and unity of the mortal and the immortal, life and death, men and gods, men and women, heaven and earth, sacred and profane. It is appropriate that the cycle should begin with the *dialogue* between the primal twins, Yama and Yamī, whose very names mean "twin" and who bridge the gap between mortal and immortal.

X.10 (836) Dialogue of Yama and Yamī

Yama Vaivasvata and Yamī Vaivasvatī
14 verses: triṣṭubh

This justly famous (and much discussed) hymn presents a tense dialogue between a pair of twins, the male Yama and female Yamī (*yamá* means "twin"; *yamī́* is the feminine form), who become the first mortals. Yamī́, who speaks first, urges her twin brother to have sex with her, so that they can have children and continue their line in the approved manner. Yama indignantly rejects her advances, outraged by the idea of incest and certain that the divine guardians of moral order will see the act and punish them.

It is impossible in a short introduction to do justice to the richness of this hymn and the extraordinary skill with which the poet deploys grammatical categories such as person, number, and verb modality in service of the condensed drama of their encounter. Both Yamī and Yama make legalistic arguments, often using juridical turns of phrase, and especially in the first part of the hymn they distance the personal and emotional implications of their speech by regularly using plural and 3rd-person forms to refer to each other. It is not until the last word of verse 4 that one of them uses a 1st-person *dual* ("we two") form. They also use dueling divine models for the relationships they are arguing for: Yama cites their near ancestors, "the Gandharva in the waters and the watery maiden," as reason not to violate the incest taboo (vs. 4) and Mitra and Varuṇa as stern enforcers (vs. 6) with spies everywhere (vs. 8)—while Yamī claims that Tvaṣṭar, who shapes embryos in the womb, made them a married couple already in the womb (vs. 5) and twice (vss. 5, 9) invokes as their divine counterparts Heaven and Earth, a notoriously incestuous pair (as she makes quite explicit in 9c). The use and placement of kinship terms

in the hymn is also notable, including the fact that "brother" and "sister" are not encountered until verse 11. It is also striking that the names of the speakers do not appear until verse 7.

The emotional temperature of the hymn rises significantly at that very point. Yamī abandons her legalistic arguments—that they need to have offspring, that they were already a married couple in the womb—in favor of a naked expression of sexual desire. Yama remains unmoved, but the roiling emotions are reflected in the ragged meter of some of the later verses (12–13), especially in the latter verse where Yamī breaks off her speech in frustration in a very short pāda containing two occurrences of a word (*batá*) found nowhere else and exhibiting aberrant phonology. Our rendering of the word aims at the level of slangy insult to which *batá* appears to belong.

The hymn ends in an impasse. Yama remains obdurate and urges Yamī to find another lover—a difficult quest when there are no other mortals! However, given the rest of his history, sketched briefly above, we must assume that he gave in in the end, on the evidence of X.13.4.

1. [Yamī:] I would turn my partner right here to partnership—even though he has gone across many (realms), across the flood.
   A (ritual) adept should provide a grandson for his father, envisioning his furtherance on the earth.
2. [Yama:] Your partner doesn't want that partnership, in that she [=sexual partner] will have the same "marks" [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender].
   The sons of the great one, the heroes of the Lord, the upholders of heaven, look around widely.
3. [Yamī:] The immortals *do* want this: a legacy of the one and only mortal.
   Your mind has (already) been set upon my mind, upon me. As husband, you should enter the body of (your) wife.
4. [Yama:] What we have not done before, should (we do it) now? While proclaiming truths, we would [/should we] murmur untruth?
   The Gandharva in the waters and the watery maiden—that is our umbilical tie; therefore our kinship is of the highest.
5. [Yamī:] (Even) in the womb the Begetter made us two a married couple, god Tvaṣṭar, the impeller who provides all forms.
   No one transgresses his commandments. Heaven and Earth take heed of this about us.
6. [Yama:] Who knows about this first day? Who has seen it; who will proclaim it here?
   Lofty is the ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa. Will you speak about superior men [=gods] with deviant (speech), lubricious one?
7. [Yamī:] Desire for Yama has come to me, Yamī, to lie together in the same womb [/place].
   Like a wife to her husband I would yield my body. We would "let 'er rip" like two chariot wheels.

8. [Yama:] They do not stand still; they do not blink—the spies of the gods who roam about here.
   With another than me, lubricious one, drive off straightaway; with him "let 'er rip" like two chariot wheels.
9. [Yamī:] Night and day she would do service to him. She could for an instant trip up the eye of the sun.
   The couple has the same (kin-)ties as Heaven and Earth. Yamī could bear the unbrotherly (act) of Yama.
10. [Yama:] Later generations will come, in which kin will perform the unkindred (act).
   Keep plumping up your arm as pillow for a (real) bull. Seek another than me as husband, well-portioned one.
11. [Yamī:] What will "brother" (mean) when there will be no refuge. And what will "sister," if Dissolution will come down?
   Driven by desire many times I murmur this: mingle your body with my body.
12. [Yama:] Verily, I must not mingle my body with your body. They call him evil who will go down on his sister.
   With another than me arrange your pleasures. Your brother does not want this, well-portioned one.
13. [Yamī:] You jerk, you really are a jerk, Yama! Truly we have not found mind and heart in you.
   Another (woman) will surely embrace you, like a girthband a yoked (horse), like a vine a tree.
14. [Yama:] You (will embrace) another, Yamī, and another will embrace you—like a vine a tree.
   Seek his mind—or he yours. Then make yourself a very happy compact.

X.11 (837) Agni

Havirdhāna Āṅgi
9 verses: jagatī 1–6, triṣṭubh 7–9

This hymn, which has some phraseological echoes of X.10 but lacks its mythological content, falls into two metrical parts, which correspond to its thematic structure. The last three verses (7–9), in triṣṭubh, are fairly straightforward, describing the benefits that accrue to a mortal who serves the ritual fire and calling on Agni to bring the divinities to the sacrifice and let it begin.

The first six verses, in jagatī, are far more complex, and, when viewed as a piece, without the three triṣṭubh verses at the end, turn out to have an omphalos structure: the middle pair of verses (3–4) are parallel in structure, have the phrase *agníṃ hótāram* "Agni (as) Hotar" opening their final pādas, and together treat both the

initiation of the current sacrifice and the charter myths for the introduction of the two ritual substances, fire and soma (with concomitant juggling of verb tenses). In verse 3 the first sacrificer, Manu, is present at the kindling of the ritual fire; verse 4 sketches the famous tale of the falcon's theft of soma from heaven.

The outer verse pairs, 1–2 and 5–6, treat these two substances and their deified counterparts, fire/Agni and soma/Soma, both simultaneously and in parallel, with the referent often left unclear. The final verse of this section (6) is especially busy, with both Agni and Soma actively performing their ritual tasks at the same time (and perhaps under the same descriptions; see esp. 6c). The tentative identifications in that verse are made on the basis of the use of the phraseology in other parts of the Ṛgveda. For example, the exact phrase "he trembles with his thought" is used of Soma in IV.71.3, and the verb translated as "he displays his power" (*taviṣyá*) in that same pāda has Soma as its subject in its two other occurrences. However, it is very likely that the poet expected the audience to consider both possibilities for the referent in each case and to grasp thereby the underlying commonalities of the two ritual substances. The first section of the hymn is thus a simpler example of the conflation of Agni and Soma found in the fiendish hymn V.44.

1. The bull [=Soma] has milked out his draughts of milk for the bull [=Indra] by the milking of heaven—he the youthfully exuberant, undeceivable (son) of Aditi.
   He [=Agni] knows everything, as Varuṇa does, through his insight. Let him who is worthy of the sacrifice perform sacrifice throughout the sacrificial sequences.
2. The Gandharvī is murmuring, and let (that) watery maiden protect my mind all around at the bellowing of the bellowing (bull) [=Soma].
   Let Aditi set us down in the middle of what we desire. Our eldest brother [=Agni] will proclaim (it) first.
3. And even now Dawn, rich in cattle, rich in glory, accompanied by the Sun, has dawned for Manu,
   when they [=priests] beget Agni as Hotar for the ritual distribution—him being eager for it and following the will of those who are (also) eager.
4. And this drop here [=Soma], widespread and widely visible, has the bird, the falcon that was sent (for it), brought here to the rite,
   when the Ārya clans choose wondrous Agni as their Hotar. And so was his insight born.
5. You are always delightful, like pasture lands to a prosperous man, (when,) o Agni, you conduct good rites with the libations of Manu,
   or when, having ritually labored and having gained for the inspired poet a prize worthy of hymns, you journey near with abundant (gifts).
6. Rouse his [=Agni's] two parents [=kindling sticks], (as) a lover (rouses) his "piece of luck" [=girl]. The gladdening one [=Soma] is seeking to attain (the cows?) and sends (speech) from his heart.

The draft-horse [=Agni and/or Soma?] is speaking; the bounteous one [=Agni?] is performing his work well. The lord [=Soma?] displays his power; he trembles (in poetic inspiration) with his thought.

7. Whatever mortal will attain your favor, o Agni, son of strength, he is famed beyond (all).
   Acquiring refreshment for himself, being conveyed by his horses, brilliant and formidable, he attends upon (you) through the days.
8. When, o Agni, this assembly will become godly among the gods, a sacrificial one, o sacrificial one,
   and when you will share out treasures, o you of independent will, then pursue a share for us rich in goods.
9. Hear us, Agni, in your seat, in your abode. Yoke the speeding chariot of the immortal one.
   Convey here to us the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods. Don't be the absent one among the gods; you should be here!

X.12 (838) Agni

Havirdhāna Āṅgi
9 verses: triṣṭubh

On first reading, this hymn appears to be full of non-sequiturs and false starts, but further consideration allows some coherence to be wrung from it. It begins innocently enough, with two verses devoted to the sacrifice initiated by Agni as Hotar, with Heaven and Earth as witnesses—picking up the topic of the last verse of the preceding hymn (X.11.9). In our view, the third verse continues that theme: an oblation derived from a cow, probably ghee, is made into the fire; thus it is Agni's "own acquisition." This sacrificial event in some sense generates the gods and their cosmic activity, which is framed as a *yájus* or sacrificial formula, and it also generates the rain, the "heavenly ghee." We may see here an early example of the famous Upaniṣadic doctrine of the Five Fires and the water-cycle, whereby the oblations, produced from the plants and animals on the earth, rise to heaven as smoke and return to earth as water, to start the cycle anew. The sacrifice begun in verse 1 seems to end with verse 4, where Heaven and Earth are again (as in vs. 1) called upon to hear us. What has been added conceptually is the notion that Heaven and Earth also participate in the cycle that the sacrifice controls, by producing rain ("honey") in the course of time.

The second half of the hymn (vss. 5–8; vs. 9 is repeated from the preceding hymn, X.11.9) appears to be on another subject, or several other subjects, entirely. It begins with the worried speaker speculating on what wrong we have done to Varuṇa, contrasting the unfathomable reactions of that god with the more forthright and reliable Mitra. It ends (vs. 8cd) with the perhaps over-hopeful assertion that Mitra, along

with Aditi and Savitar, will declare us blameless to Varuṇa. But the verses in between (6–7) at first seem unconnected with this current drama. It is our contention, however, that these verses, especially verse 6 about Yama, provide the mythological support for the poet's hope that his relationship with Varuṇa can be repaired.

Verse 6 needs to be read in the context of X.10, the famous dialogue between Yama and his twin sister Yamī, but also of X.13.4, another cryptic verse about Yama in this cycle of hymns. In X.10, as is well known, Yama and Yamī argue about her desire to have sex with him in order to produce offspring. He strongly resists, condemning (X.10.2) their possible pairing by characterizing it with the phrase also quoted in 6b of this hymn: *sálakṣmā yád víṣurūpā bhávāti*, "that (the female) will have the same 'marks' [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender]" in our rendering. This phrase has received many different interpretations; we believe that it defines the forbidden incestuous partner Yamī as being of the same family but of a different shape—female rather than male—as Yama. The dialogue of X.10 ends with the issue unresolved. It is X.13.4 that seems to give us the answer. In that verse Yama "chose death" for the sake of the gods and for the sake of offspring "did not choose immortality." It seems that Yama was born immortal (see esp. I.83.5) but chose to forego this state, in order to produce children and also to institute the sacrifice to the gods. This act of self-abnegation and the change of state it produced is, in our view, what is being celebrated in verse 6 here. The poet first (pāda a) mentions Yama's "immortal (name)," which he does not want to think about—since it reminds him of the taint of incest (pāda b), but his other name, by implication the "mortal" one, is a happy one to think about and ensures Agni's protection for the thinker. (Note that the actual name Yama is only mentioned in the second instance.)

In the next verse (7) we move to the seat of Vivasvant, a common kenning for the ritual ground, but in this context it is important to remember that Yama is a descendant of Vivasvant (see his patronymic in, e.g., nearby X.14.1 *vaivasvatám... yamám*). The juxtaposition of Yama in verse 6 and Vivasvant in verse 7 reminds the audience that Yama chose death in order to institute the sacrifice, and further reminds them that when they perform sacrifice they are replicating the actions of Yama, which transformed his bad reputation ("name difficult to contemplate") into a good one. Thus, though we still have no idea why the gods do what they do (see 7ab, 8ab), we trust in the power of our sacrifice to make things right with these inscrutable gods.

1. Heaven and Earth, who speak what is real, become the first to hear in accordance with truth,
   when the god, setting mortals to sacrifice, takes his seat as Hotar facing (them), as he comes to his own life.
2. As the god encompassing the gods in accordance with truth, first convey our oblation, as the observant one,
   possessing a beacon of smoke, foaming with radiance by kindling, you, the gladdening constant Hotar, who sacrifice better with your speech.

3. It's the god's own acquisition: the immortal (drink) that comes from the cow. "Those born therefrom uphold the two wide (worlds)"—
   this sacrificial formula of yours do all the gods follow, when the speckled (cow) gives as her milk the heavenly ghee, the water.
4. I sing your work [/waters], o ghee-backed pair, to strengthen (it/them). Hear me, o Heaven and Earth, you two world-halves.
   When the daytimes and the days will go (on the way) leading to the other life, then let our parents [=Heaven and Earth?] hone us with honey.

5. Why has king (Varuṇa) grasped [/complained about] us? What commandment of his have we transgressed? Who fully understands?
   For Mitra, even when angry [/moving crookedly], is like a signal-call (going) to the gods, also (like) the victory-prize of those driving (in chariots).
6. Difficult to contemplate is the name of the immortal (male) in the case "that (the female) will have the same 'marks' [=family characteristics] (though) dissimilar form [=gender]."
   Whoever will contemplate Yama's (name that is) good to contemplate— protect him unremittingly, o lofty Agni.
7. At which ritual distribution the gods reach exhilaration and uphold (the two worlds) at the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground]—
   they placed the light in the sun and the nights in the moon: the two [=sun and moon] move around the brightness [=Agni] without wearying—
8. On which cryptic thought the gods converge—we do not know it.
   May Mitra, Aditi, and god Savitar here declare us to Varuṇa to be without offense.

9. Hear us, Agni, in your seat, in your abode. Yoke the speeding chariot of the immortal one.
   Convey here to us the two world-halves, whose sons are the gods. Don't be the absent one among the gods; you should be here!

X.13 (839) The Soma Carts

Havirdhāna Āṅgi or Vivasvant Āditya
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 5

According to the Anukramaṇī, this hymn is addressed to the two havirdhāna carts, the carts on which the soma is brought to the place of sacrifice. Although the carts are not explicitly mentioned in the hymn, this assignment is undoubtedly correct and confirmed by the recitation of the first two verses in the later canonical ritual when the carts are pushed into place. The first four verses are also found in

Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) XVIII.38–41 (in slightly different order) in a large collection of funeral verses, while verse 5 is paralleled by Atharvaveda VII.57.2. The hymn presents a number of difficulties, and the conceptual relationship among the verses is not always clear. Nonetheless, for various reasons (to be sketched below) it seems likely that the R̥gvedic hymn forms a unity.

The first two verses are the clearest and have the clearest ritual content: the two soma carts are hitched up, the signal for the sacrifice is given, and the carts are brought to the sacrificial ground.

After these two verses of relative clarity, we are plunged into the numerological obscurity of verse 3—not surprisingly the middle verse with the typical form of an omphalos verse. (Oldenberg refers to its "vague mysticism" [*vage Mystik*] and suggests resignation as a proper response for the interpreter [1913: 135 = 1967: 822].) It does not help that the first, scene-setting pāda contains the impossible word *rúp*, which arouses the same bewilderment in its other occurrence, IV.5.7. Nonetheless, we can sketch some parameters for the interpretation of the verse, though our interpretation is quite insecure in detail. First, it seems to continue the ritual scenario of the first two verses, and the 1st-person speaker, with his four 1st-person verbs, matches the speaker of the first pāda of the hymn. In the first pāda of this verse we suggest (following an offhand suggestion of Oldenberg's [1913: 136 = 1967: 823]) that the "five steps" (*páñca padā́ni*) of the *rúp* (here translated "mount") are the five verses of this very hymn. The "four-footed" (*cátuṣpadī*) entity in the next verse must be feminine in gender, and various suggestions have been made for what noun to supply. We believe that its reference is deliberately ambiguous: it may refer to the four pādas of a verse (*ŕ̥c* fem.), thus continuing the (possible) theme of 3a. It has also been suggested that the noun is *vartaní* "course, track" (also feminine), and the speaker is literally following the track of the two soma carts, each with two wheels, thus four wheel-ruts altogether. The only other R̥gvedic occurrence of the adjective "four-footed" is in I.164.41, where it modifies the noun *gaurī́* "buffalo cow" referring to Speech, which is regularly said to consist of four parts. Thus in our view this pāda refers both to ritual action (following the four wheel-ruts of the carts) and ritual speech (the four-pāda verse), and ritual speech in particular calls to mind Speech in general. In the next pāda (3c) the poet seems to make explicit the equivalence of his particular ritual speech and Speech in general by claiming to make a single syllable the equivalent of Speech herself. This mystical treatment of the ritual ends with a purification (3d).

Verse 4 veers off in a different direction and alludes obliquely to what we might call the Felix Culpa ("fortunate fall") of Yama, who, though born immortal (at least according to I.83.5 and possibly X.17.1), chose death over immortality in order to sacrifice to the gods (pāda a) and produce offspring (pādas b and d), whereas the gods constituted their sacrifice through Br̥haspati and avoided death but also do not reproduce. (So, roughly, Geldner.) This fleeting reference to Yama's choice seems to answer the question left hanging at the end of X.10—will Yama yield to Yamī's frenzied entreaties for sex or will he maintain his ascetic distance? On the basis of

the offspring mentioned here, he seems to have yielded, though in the present verse the role of Yamī has been elided and the agency rests with Yama—he "chose."

But why, one may well ask, is this bit of Yama's history found in a hymn dedicated to the soma carts? It is probably more productive to ask why a hymn to the soma carts is found in this Yama cycle (X.10–19), positioned right before the funeral hymns, especially X.14 dedicated to Yama. First, remember that the Atharvaveda repetitions of the first four verses of this hymn are found in the collection of funeral verses, so to the compilers of the Atharvaveda they must have seemed appropriate to a funeral context. Note, moreover, that the carts themselves are called "twins" (*yamé*) in verse 2, paired with verse 4 around the omphalos verse 3; "twins" of course calls to mind the twin couple Yama and Yamī. The pairing of the two carts also reminds us of the two divergent paths, one leading to the gods (*devayā́na*), one to the ancestors or forefathers (*pitr̥yā́na*); the latter is the one that the dead follow to the world where Yama presides. This journey is a particular preoccupation of the funeral hymns, and the conflation of the twin (*yamé*) soma carts with the twin paths, one of which leads to Yama, may explain how the soma carts ended up in the Yama collection.

The final verse brings the hymn full circle, but with a series of tricks embedded in it. On the surface the last half of the verse returns to the ritual situation and the soma carts, which take their places (*yatete*) with the same phraseology as verse 2 (*yátamāne*). They rule over and thrive on "it" of both kinds, most likely a reference to both pure and mixed soma (cf., e.g., VIII.101.10). But the lack of explicit referents for any of the forms of "both," combined with the first half of the verse, which has nothing obvious to do with the carts, invites us to look further. The first half of the verse seems to draw the same contrast as in verse 4 between gods and mortals. While the referent in pāda a is fairly clearly Indra (the epithet "accompanied by the Maruts" being a strong clue), we are inclined to see Yama as the referent in pāda b; he who surrendered his immortality for the sake of offspring is identified as a father in conjunction with sons, in fact the mortals whom he sired after he chose death. We, the poets and sacrificers, are among these sons, and have learned our verbal craft ("have made truth [our] familiar") and produced this poem.

If we are correct in our identification of Yama as the father in 5b, there are several further implications for the structure and contents of this hymn. On the one hand, the father and sons of 5b both recall and contrast with "all the sons of the immortal one" in 1c, for those were the gods. So we have another element of a formal ring structure, but with a different referent. The contrastive pairs Indra/Yama and gods/mortals may also underlie the insistent "both/both kinds" of the second half of verse 5, where (despite the neuter [or feminine] gender of the repeated subject *ubhé* "both") Indra and Yama may be credited with joint rulership (note that Yama is called "king" in the first verse of the next hymn, X.14.1d) and prosperity.

To sum up and indeed to go further, this hymn, and the hymn cycle within which it is embedded, are a reflection of and a reflection on the dualities that define

human existence: mortal and immortal, male and female, heaven and earth, sacred and profane, as we pointed out in the introduction to the Yama cycle as a whole. These dualities are neatly conceptually symbolized in the notion of twins, the primal twins Yama and Yamī, and in this hymn also ritually symbolized by the twin soma carts, appropriate both to the sacrifice and to the divergent paths that lead to the gods and the ancestors respectively, thus providing a proper preface to the funeral hymns that follow.

1. I yoke for you two with reverence the age-old sacred formulation. Let the signal-call of the patron go forth afar like a pathway.
   Let all the sons of the immortal one [=gods] listen (to it)—those who inhabit the heavenly domains.
2. When, taking your own places like twins, you came here, the god-seeking descendants of Manu brought you forward.
   Sit here upon your own wide space, as you know it. Become good seats for our drop.
3. I have mounted along the five steps of the mount, and I go along following the four-footed (track/verse/speech) according to commandment.
   With (just) a syllable I make a counterpart to it [=Speech?]. Upon the navel of truth I purify (it) completely.
4. For the sake of the gods he chose death and for the sake of offspring he did not choose immortality.
   They [=gods] made Bṛhaspati, the seer, into their sacrifice. Yama left behind his own dear body (as offspring).
5. The seven (rivers?) flow for the child accompanied by the Maruts [=Indra]. For their father [=Yama?] have the sons made truth their familiar.
   Both (carts) rule over it [=soma?] of both kinds. Both take their places, and thrive on the one of both kinds.

X.14 (840) Yama, etc.

Yama Vaivasvata
16 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 13–14, 16 and bṛhatī 15

This is the first of the funeral hymns, and it is dedicated for the most part to Yama, the first to die and the king of the world of the dead, where the forefathers dwell and to which a newly dead person makes his way along the *pitṛyā́na* or "way of the forefathers." Because he was the first to die, Yama discovered this path and blazed the trail, as it were, to the pleasant, well-watered (vs. 9) pasture-land (vs. 2).

The hymn falls into three parts. Verses 1–6 offer praise to Yama as the pathfinder to the ancestral world (vss. 1–2) and then invite him to attend our sacrifice along

with others, both gods and ancestors—suggesting implicitly that the *pitr̥yā́na* is a two-way street. It is also noteworthy that, though the gods and the forefathers respond to slightly different variants of the ritual cry (vs. 3: *svā́hā* for the gods versus *svadhā́* for the forefathers), the mechanisms for the sacrifice to gods and forefathers are presented as more or less identical in this section and in verses 13–16, and in particular Yama is offered soma. See also the next hymn, X.15.

Verses 7–12 concern not this age-old death but a recent one. A newly dead man is addressed and urged to follow the same path, to join Yama and the ancestors in highest heaven and even to reunite with the body from which he has been temporarily separated (vss. 7–8). Potential troublemakers along the way are dismissed (vs. 9), and the dead man is escorted by the two formidable guardian dogs of Yama (vss. 10–12).

The last four verses (13–16) are in dimeter meter (save for 15c), instead of the triṣṭubh of the rest of the hymn. The first three are simple exhortations to perform sacrifice to Yama; the final verse (16) is by contrast quite opaque, with some of the typical marks of obscurity: unidentified referents (pādas a and b), numerology (pāda b), and manipulation of names of meters (pāda c). In particular, pāda b presents us with six broad feminine entities and one lofty neuter one. (The contrasting grammatical genders so obvious in the Sanskrit are not easily rendered in translation.) The six broad feminines are generally considered to be worlds or realms (on the basis of VI.47.3, which, however, doesn't have an overt referent either), and the lofty neuter some other superior type of space. Given the extreme uncertainty of the referents, the syntax (should pāda b be construed with pāda a, or with cd, or, as we have done, connected neither to what precedes nor what follows?), and the reason for the presence of this verse as the finale of this hymn, we have chosen to leave the meaning open.

1. To the one who has departed along the great slopes, having spied out the path for many,
   son of Vivasvant, unifier of the peoples—to Yama the king show favor with oblation.
2. Yama first found the way for us: this pasture-land is not to be taken away.
   (The way) on which our ancient forefathers departed, along that (do) those who have since been born (follow) along their own paths.
3. Mātalī having been strengthened along with the poets, Yama with the Aṅgirases, Br̥haspati with the versifiers,
   both those whom the gods strengthen and who strengthen the gods—the ones [=gods] become exhilarated on (the cry) "*svāhā*," the others [=forefathers] on "*svadhā*."
4. This strewn grass here, Yama—just sit here on it, in concord with the Aṅgirases, our forefathers.
   Let mantras pronounced by poets convey you hither. Become exhilarated on this oblation, o king.

5. With the Aṅgirases, deserving of the sacrifice, come hither; Yama, become exhilarated here along with the Vairūpas—
   I call upon Vivasvant, who is your father—once having sat down at this sacrifice, on this ritual grass here.
6. The Aṅgirases, our forefathers, the Navagvas, the Atharvaṇas, the Bhr̥gus deserving of soma—
   may we be in the favor of these who are deserving of the sacrifice; may we be also in their propitious benevolence.

7. Go forth, go forth along the ancient paths on which our ancient forefathers departed.
   You will see both kings becoming exhilarated on the *svadhā*(-cry), Yama and Varuṇa the god.
8. Unite with the forefathers, unite with Yama, with what has been sacrificed and bestowed, in the highest distant heaven.
   Having left behind imperfection, come home again. Unite with your body in your full luster.
9. (You all)—go away, go apart, and slink away from here. It is for him that the forefathers made this world.
   A resting place anointed with waters through the days and nights Yama gives to him.
10. Outrun the two dogs of Saramā's breed, four-eyed and brindled, along the path that leads straight to the goal.
   Then approach the forefathers who are good to find, who reach exhilaration in joint revelry with Yama.
11. Your two dogs, Yama, who are guardians, four-eyed guards of the path with their eyes on men—
   to them deliver him, o king. Provide for him well-being and freedom from disease.
12. The two broad-nosed, reddish-brown messengers of Yama, stealers of lives, pursue the peoples.
   Let these two here today grant a fortunate life again to us, to see the sun.

13. For Yama press the soma; for Yama pour the oblation.
   To Yama goes the sacrifice, properly prepared, with Agni as messenger.
14. For Yama pour the ghee-rich oblation and set it forth.
   He will guide us to the gods, for us to live for a long lifetime.
15. For Yama the king pour the most honeyed oblation.
   Here is homage to the seers born of old, to the age-old makers of the path.
16. He flies with the Trikadrukas. Six are broad, but just one is lofty.
   The triṣṭubh, the gāyatrī, the meters—all these are established in Yama.

X.15 (841) Pitars

Śaṅkha Yāmāyana
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 11

This hymn is simply an expansion on the invitation in the last hymn (X.14.4–6) to the forefathers to come to our sacrifice. They are repeatedly urged to sit on the ritual grass, to partake of the offerings, including soma, and to provide us with material and spiritual benefits in return. The language is quite straightforward, with very few verbal tricks. Only in verse 3 do we encounter a turn of phrase that invites our inquiry: in the first half of the verse "I" find not only the forefathers on the ritual ground but also "the grandson/child" (*nápāt*) and the "stride of Viṣṇu." The "grandson" may be a reference to Agni, often called "child of strength" (*ū́rjo nápāt*) and also frequently identified with the "Child of the Waters" (Apām Napāt), but it may also and simultaneously refer to the various descendants of the returning forefathers, descendants who would be present at the ritual and serving at it. As for Viṣṇu's wide stride, most commentators take this as the highest heaven, that is, the last of Viṣṇu's three strides. But it is hard to understand how this would be found "here"; we think rather that it refers to Viṣṇu's first stride, which measures out the earth, and in this case that it is a specific reference to the delineated sacrificial space.

Toward the end of the hymn, the god Agni becomes prominent (vss. 9–14) and his special relationship with the forefathers—as their cremation fire—is alluded to (esp. vss. 11, 14).

1. Let the nearer ones rise up, up the further, up those in the middle—the forefathers deserving of soma.
   Those who have gone to (their next) life avoiding the wolf, knowing the truth, let those forefathers help us at the invocations.
2. Let this homage here today be for the forefathers—those who went previously, those who went later,
   those who are seated here in the earthly realm, or who are now among the clans of good community.
3. I have found here the forefathers good to find and the grandson and the wide stride of Viṣṇu.
   Those who, sitting on the ritual grass, share in the pressed soma and the food at (the cry of) "*svadhā*," they are the most welcome arrivals here.
4. You forefathers who sit on the ritual grass inclined this way with your aid, we have made these oblations for you. Enjoy!
   Come here with your most luck-bringing help. Then provide for us luck and lifetime without flaw.
5. The forefathers deserving of soma have been summoned here to the dear stores on the ritual grass.
   Let them come hither, let them listen (to us) here; let them speak on (our) behalf, let them help us.

6. Having bent your knee, having sat down to the south, greet this sacrifice here—all of you.
   Do not harm us, o forefathers, because of any offense that we may do to you in our human way.
7. Sitting in the lap of the ruddy (Dawns?), provide wealth for the pious mortal.
   To your sons, o forefathers, hold out (a portion) of this good thing. Provide nourishment here.
8. Those ancient forefathers of ours deserving of soma, the Vasiṣṭhas, who journeyed along to the soma-drinking,
   in joint enjoyment with them let Yama—he eager with them eager—eat the oblations according to their desire.
9. Those who have thirsted, panting, among the gods, those knowing the priestly functions, those fashioned by praise along with chants—
   with them, o Agni, drive here, turned this way—with the forefathers who are good to find and truly here, the poets who sit by the gharma drink.
10. Those who are truly here—eating oblations, drinking oblations, taking their place on the same chariot with Indra, with the gods—
    with them, o Agni, drive here—with the thousand god-extolling, further, earlier forefathers, who sit by the gharma-drink.
11. Sweetened by Agni, o forefathers, come here. Sit each on his own seat, you of good guidance.
    Eat the oblations set forth on the ritual grass. Then provide wealth in hale heroes.
12. You, Agni Jātavedas, reverently invoked, have conveyed the oblations, having made them very fragrant.
    You have presented them to the forefathers; they have eaten them at (the cry of) "*svadhā*." (Now) you, o god—eat the oblations set forth.
13. Both the forefathers who are here and those who are not here, both those whom we know and those whom we do not know,
    you know how many they are, o Jātavedas. Through your own powers [/at *svadhā*-calls], enjoy the well-performed sacrifice.
14. Those burned by fire and those not burned by fire who become exhilarated at (the cry of) "*svadhā*" in the middle of heaven,
    along with them (go) as sovereign king (on the way) leading to (the other) life. Arrange your body as you wish.

X.16 (842) Agni

Damana Yāmāyana
24 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 11–14

The focus on the cremation fire in the last part of the preceding hymn (X.15) is enlarged upon here. This fire is seen both as a blessed release of the dead man

to the realm of the ancestors and as a menace to the vulnerable dead body. This ambivalence is clearly on display in the first verse, where the fire is begged not to burn up the body, but, on the other hand, to make the dead man "cooked" and ready to go to the forefathers. The same sentiment is repeated in verse 2, and the journey undertaken. The dead body itself is addressed in verse 3, with its parts consigned to the corresponding cosmic entities. Two more verses to Agni follow (4–5), continuing the themes of verses 1–2. In verses 6–7 the body is addressed again: in verse 6 it is reassured that the physical indignities it has undergone since death will be fixed by the cremation fire and by soma, but in verse 7 it is urged to protect itself against the same fire. The cremation seems to end with verse 8.

With the cremation concluded, the next verses (9–12) treat the inauspicious but powerful cremation fire and the means to render it harmless and to reintegrate it into the generally auspicious sphere of fire. The "flesh-eating fire" is first explicitly distinguished from "the other" fire, the ritual fire that receives the oblations to the gods, and the flesh-eating fire is assigned the task of taking the sacrifice to the ancestors and bringing them to the sacrifice here. Since this task is parallel to that of the other fire, the gods' ritual mediator, the negative aspects of the flesh-eating fire can be set aside, and it can be conceptually reconfigured as a positive force, a transformation completed in verse 12.

In the final two verses (13–14) the place where the cremation took place returns to nature, with the fire extinguished and plants growing again. The import of the final apostrophe to a cool and chilly feminine entity is clear, even though the referent (a water plant?) is not.

1. Don't burn him through, Agni; don't scorch him; don't singe his skin,
   nor his body.
   When you will make him cooked to readiness, Jātavedas, then impel him
   forth to the forefathers.
2. When you will have made him cooked to readiness, Jātavedas, then
   deliver him to the forefathers.
   When he will embark on the (way) leading to (the other) life, then he will
   lead at the will of the gods.
3. Let your eye go to the sun, your life-breath to the wind. Go to heaven
   and to earth as is fitting.
   Or go to the waters, if it has been fixed for you there. Take your stand in
   the plants with your limbs.
4. The goat is your portion. With your heat, heat it up. Let your flame heat
   it up, let your beam.
   The propitious bodies that are yours, o Jātavedas, with those convey him
   to the world of good (ritual) performers.
5. Release him again to the forefathers, o Agni—the one who, offered to
   you, proceeds by his own powers.
   Clothing himself in life, let him go in pursuit of his remains: let him
   unite with his body, o Jātavedas.

6. What of yours the black omen-bird pecked at, or the ant, the serpent, or the dog-footed (beast),
   let omnivorous Agni make it free from curse, and Soma, who has entered the brahmins.
7. Make for yourself an enveloping armor against fire with (the flesh of) cows. Cover yourself entirely with grease and fat,
   lest the bold one, bristling with his flame, fasten himself around you, intending to utterly burn you up.
8. This beaker here, o Agni—don't overturn it. It is dear to the gods and to those deserving of soma [=forefathers]—
   the beaker that is the drinking vessel of the gods—in it the immortal gods find their exhilaration.
9. Flesh-eating Agni I send off in the distance. Carrying away defilements, let him go to those who have Yama as king.
   Here let only this one, the other Jātavedas, carry the oblations to the gods, knowing what's ahead.
10. The flesh-eating Agni who entered your house, though he saw this one here, the other Jātavedas—
    that god I take for the sacrifice to the forefathers. He will send the gharma (drink) to the highest seat.
11. The flesh-conveying Agni who will sacrifice to the forefathers, who are strong through truth,
    he will proclaim the oblations to the gods and the forefathers.
12. Eagerly we would install you; eagerly we would kindle you.
    Eagerly convey the eager forefathers here, to eat the oblation.
13. The one whom you have entirely burnt, Agni, that one extinguish in turn.
    Let the *kiyāmbu* plant grow here and the *pākadūrvā* and the *vyalkaśā*.
14. O cool lady full of cooling, chilly lady full of chill,
    join together with the lady frog—stimulate this fire here.

X.17 (843) Various Divinities: Saraṇyū (1–2), Pūṣan (3–6), Sarasvatī (7–9), the Waters (10, 14), the Waters or Soma (11–13)

Devaśravas Yāmāyana
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh or purastādbr̥hatī 13, anuṣṭubh 14

This hymn consists of a disparate collection of segments, which do not seem to form a coherent whole and which do not always have an obvious connection to the death/funeral context of this cycle of hymns.

The first two enigmatic verses may well be the most discussed of all R̥gvedic mythological sketches, although this wide-ranging and ongoing discussion has not brought as much clarity as could be desired. The verses provide us with a skeletal

three-generation mythological family tree, with a father, the god Tvaṣṭar, and his daughter, who is identified as both mother of Yama and wife of Vivasvant. All this is fairly clearly set out in the first verse: it opens with a Svayaṃvara ("self-choice marriage") invitation issued by the father for his daughter, to which the whole world responds (1ab), and the second half (1cd) appears to summarize the results of that marriage—the husband chosen apparently being Vivasvant, and the child issuing from the marriage apparently being Yama. (It should be noted, though, that the identity of Tvaṣṭar's daughter [1a] with the mother of Yama [1c] and wife of Vivasvant [1d] is only implicit from context, not expressly stated, and her name is not given in vs. 1.) The only disquieting part of this verse comes with the last word: "she disappeared" (*nanāśa*). This word sets the stage for its companion verse.

The second verse considerably muddies the clean lines of our initial family tree. It turns out that the vanished woman of verse 1 was actually hidden away (2a) by an unnamed set of individuals—perhaps the gods, who create and pass off on (the unsuspecting?) Vivasvant a simulacrum of his wife (2b). In the second half of the verse the neat maternal line of 1c is likewise made obscure: someone (the original woman? the simulacrum?) bears the Aśvins (2c), and she (or the other female) leaves behind (abandons? leaves as a legacy?) two unnamed paired ones (2d). Yama, the son in 1c, is not mentioned by name, but he may lurk as part of the two in 2d (Yama and Yamī? Yama and Manu?), who could on the other hand be the aforementioned Aśvins. Each of these possibilities has had its scholarly champions (and it has in fact also been argued that 2d refers to *two* pairs, that is four in all). The last word of verse 2 is the feminine name Saraṇyū (lit., "hastening"), seeming to identify our protagonist, but the name provides little help, and could, in principle, belong to either the original or the duplicate woman.

All in all, the two verses seem deliberately and cleverly designed to mislead and confuse, and in that they have admirably succeeded, beginning with the retellings of the story in the later Vedic tradition and continuing to this day. The myth has also often been invoked in a comparative Indo-European context. (For a recent discussion of the history of scholarship and for his own Indo-European interpretation, see Jackson 2006: Part II: esp. 72–93.) This is not the place to produce a full treatment of the myth behind the verses or its various interpretations; suffice it to say that we are inclined to see the paired two in 2d as Yama and Yamī, in part because a connection with Yama's history is the only way to make sense of the inclusion of these verses here.

The relevance of the next set of verses (4–6), to Pūṣan, is considerably clearer. Pūṣan as the good guide and finder of lost livestock makes an excellent psychopomp, leading the dead along the dangerous path to the next world.

The goddess, and river, Sarasvatī is addressed in the next three verses (7–9), with a final verse (10) to the Waters in general. Sarasvatī here seems especially connected with the dead forefathers and the offerings to them at the ritual (esp. vss. 8–9); this may be an early foreshadowing of the later ritual offering of water to the dead, or, as verse 10 suggests, connected with the general purificatory power of waters (see X.9.6–9 earlier in this maṇḍala).

Verses 10–13 concern the "drop" (*drapsá*) and are addressed in the 2nd person to Soma, who is never named but clearly identifiable from his characteristic vocabulary. There is no mention of the forefathers or of anything related to a funeral, and there is no obvious reason why these verses should have been attached to this hymn. Indeed, the final purificatory verse (14) would follow better directly on verse 10.

1. "Tvaṣṭar is arranging a wedding for his daughter": (on hearing) thus, all this world comes together.
   The mother of Yama, the wife of great Vivasvant, while being conveyed around (on her wedding journey), went missing.
2. They hid her away, the immortal, from the mortals. Having made a female of the same appearance, they gave her to Vivasvant.
   And she was carrying the Aśvins (in the womb), as it happened, and she left behind the two, the paired ones [=Yama and Yamī?]—Saraṇyū.

3. Let Pūṣan stir you forth from here—the wise one, whose livestock doesn't get lost, the herdsman of the world.
   He will deliver you to these forefathers; Agni (will deliver you) to the gods who are good to find.
4. Āyu ("Lifetime") having a complete lifetime will protect you all around. Let Pūṣan protect you from in front on the path forward.
   Where those of good action sit, where they have gone, there let god Savitar place you.
5. Pūṣan knows all these regions through and through: he will lead us along the least perilous (way).
   Granting well-being, the glowing one, possessing hale heroes—not keeping distant, let him go in front, foreknowing.
6. On the forward path of paths was Pūṣan born, on the forward path of heaven, on the forward path of earth.
   He wanders back and forth to both the dearest seats, foreknowing.

7. Sarasvatī do those seeking the gods invoke, Sarasvatī when the ceremony is being extended.
   Sarasvatī did those of good action invoke. Sarasvatī will give a thing of value to the pious.
8. O Sarasvatī, you who drove on the same chariot with the forefathers, becoming exhilarated at the *svadhā*(-calls), o goddess—
   having taken your seat here on this ritual grass, bring yourself to exhilaration. Provide us refreshments that bring no disease.
9. Sarasvatī, whom the forefathers invoke, as they arrive at the sacrifice in the south—
   provide here a portion of refreshment worth thousands and thriving of wealth among the sacrificers.

10. Let the waters, the mothers cleanse us; let them, ghee-pure, purify us with their ghee,
    for the goddesses carry forth every defilement. I rise up from them gleaming, purified.

11. The drop spurted through the first days, both through this womb here and the former one.
    I offer the drop circling around through the same womb, according to the seven priestly functions.
12. Your drop that spurts and your plant that is set in motion by the arms, from the lap of the Holy Place,
    or from the Adhvaryu or from the filter, that one of yours I offer with my mind when the *vaṣaṭ*-cry is made.
13. Your drop that has spurted, your plant, and what is below and what beyond the ladle—
    let this god Bṛhaspati pour it all together for benefit.

14. Full of milk are the plants, full of milk my little speech.
    Full of milk indeed is the milk of the waters. With it cleanse me altogether.

X.18 (844) Death, etc.

Saṃkusuka Yāmāyana
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except 11 prastārapaṅkti, 13 jagatī, 14 anuṣṭubh

This lovely hymn falls into several sections, each treating the end of the funeral service. The first six verses depict the mourners leaving the service and returning to their lives. Death is dismissed in verse 1, and in verses 2–3 the living turn back to an enhanced life, full of "dancing and laughter" (vs. 3). They are separated from death by a barrier (vs. 4); in the later ritual a stone is set down near the grave. Verses 5–6 are especially concerned with the orderly sequence of life and death, in particular the fear that the younger will die before their elders and disrupt the proper sequence (see esp. 5cd).

The next three verses (7–9) have been much discussed, especially in the context of "suttee" (*satī*) or widow-burning, though the verses are emphatically not a depiction thereof. From verse 8 it appears that the widow lies down, temporarily, beside her dead husband, but is summoned back to life and indeed symbolically reborn to become the wife of a new husband (quite possibly her brother-in-law, in levirate marriage). The happy women in verse 7 apparently approach the funeral pyre to adorn the widow for her return to life. A similar "return to life" is granted the dead man's bow in verse 9, where someone, quite possibly the dead man's son, repossesses the bow to put it to future use.

The burial is the subject of verses 10–13, with an emphasis on the softness and gentleness of the welcoming earth, both mother and bride, which lies lightly on the dead man. Verse 13 forms a sort of ring with verse 1, with both expressing a prohibition against harm with the same construction and the same root √*riṣ* (1d *mā́*… *rīriṣaḥ*, 13b *mā́*… *riṣam*). This ring defines the final verse (14) as outside the hymn proper, and other indications support this extra-hymnic status. It is in dimeter meter, instead of the trimeter that prevails elsewhere, and the Aśvalāyana Gr̥hya Sūtra, which treats the ritual usage of all the other verses, ignores it, as does the medieval commentator Sāyaṇa. The sense of this verse is also much disputed. Many scholars think that the poet is predicting his own future death, on a day that is approaching him, in the first hemistich, and in the second he restrains his speech in anticipation. (As Geldner says, rather more dramatically than usual, "der Rest ist Schweigen" [the rest is silence].) In contrast, we consider this to belong to the typical genre of hymn-final meta-poetic verses, in which the poet comments on his own skill in producing the poem that precedes. By this interpretation, the first half-verse concerns the well-conducted funeral that has just taken place, while the second refers specifically to the poet's taming and controlling the speech that accompanied that ritual.

1. Depart, Death, along the further path, which is your own, different from the one leading to the gods.
   To you who possess eyes and who listen do I speak: do not harm our offspring nor our heroes.
2. Effacing the footprint of death when you have gone, establishing for yourselves a longer, more extended lifetime,
   swelling up with offspring and wealth, become cleansed and purified, o you who are worthy of the sacrifice.
3. These the living have turned aside from the dead. The invocation of the gods has become favorable for us today.
   We have gone facing forward to dancing, to laughter, establishing for ourselves a longer, more extended lifetime.
4. I set down this barrier here for the living. Let no one of these later go to this goal.
   Let them live for a hundred ample autumns. Let them conceal death with a mountain.
5. Just as the days follow each upon the last, just as the seasons follow straightaway upon the seasons,
   so, o Ordainer, arrange their lifetimes, so that the later does not leave behind the earlier.
6. Mount your lifetime, choosing old age, taking your place each following the last, as many as you are.
   Here will Tvaṣṭar, affording good birth, in concert (with the Wives of the Gods), make a long lifetime for you to live.

7. These women here, non-widows with good husbands—let them, with fresh butter as ointment, approach together.
   Without tears, without afflictions, well-jeweled, let the wives first mount the womb.
8. "Arise, woman, to the world of the living. You lie beside him whose life is gone. Come here!
   You have come into existence now as wife of a husband who has grasped your hand and wishes to have you."
9. Taking the bow from the hand of the dead for our dominion, luster, and strength,
   you there and we here—may we with good heroes win all contests and hostile engagements.

10. Creep upon this mother earth, the broad earth of wide expanse, who is very kindly.
    The young girl, soft as wool for the one who gives priestly gifts—let her protect you from the lap of Dissolution.
11. Arch up, Earth; do not press down. Become easy to approach for him, easy to curl up in.
    Like a mother her son with her hem, cover him, Earth.
12. Let the earth stay arching up. For let a thousand (house)posts be fixed in (her).
    Let the house be dripping with ghee. Let it always be sheltering to him there.
13. I prop up the earth from you. Setting down this earth clod here, let me not be harmed.
    Let the forefathers uphold this pillar for you. There let Yama fix your seats.

14. On the day facing me [=today] they have set (him=dead man) down like a feather from an arrow.
    The speech facing me I have grasped, like a horse by its halter.

X.19 (845) Cows

Mathita Yāmāyana or Bhr̥gu Vāruṇi or Cyavana Bhārgava
8 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 6

This simple, repetitive, but charming call to the cows to come home is the final hymn of the Yama collection, though its connection to the other hymns in the cycle, especially the funeral hymns that immediately precede it, is unclear. The signature idiom in this hymn is "turn back," and perhaps it was attached to the Yama cycle on thematic grounds, because the first verses of the preceding hymn, X.18, concern the return to life of the living after the funeral of their dead kinsman (see esp. X.18.3).

1. Turn back. Don't keep going. Keep company with us, o rich ones.
   O Agni and Soma, who bring goods back, hold our wealth fast for us.
2. Turn them back again; bring them back here again.
   Let Indra hold them back; let Agni drive them near.
3. Let these turn back again. Let them prosper in (the care of) this man, the lord of the cattle.
   Right here, o Agni, fix them down fast. Here let it remain—our wealth.
4. Also the one who is the cowherd—I call him to the journeying back, the coming back, the bringing to agreement, and the going away,
   to the turning here and the turning back.
5. He who has managed the dispersal, who has managed the going away,
   the turning here, and the turning back—let the cowherd also turn back.
6. You turner back, turn them back here; give the cows to us again, o Indra.
   Let us find enjoyment with them alive.
7. On every side I surround you with nourishment, ghee, and milk.
   Whatever gods there are who are worthy of the sacrifice, let them join us with wealth.
8. You turner back, turn them here; you turner back, turn them back.
   The earth has four quarters: from these, turn them back.

The Anukramaṇī gives a choice of authorship for the next seven hymns, X.20–26: Vimada, the son of Indra or Prajāpati, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra. The patronymic of the latter choice would identify the poet as a son or descendant of Vasukra Aindra, the author of the three desperately difficult hymns that immediately follow (27–29). The poet of X.25.11 also identifies with or identifies himself as Kakṣīvant, the very skilled poet of I.116–126.

Whatever the poet's affiliation, he is fond of unusual meters (see esp. 21, 22, 24, 25) as well as puns on the name Vimada. The hymns are dedicated to Agni (20–21), Indra (22–1st half of 24), the Aśvins (2nd half of 24), Soma (25), and Pūṣan (26).

X.20 (846) Agni

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
10 verses: gāyatrī, except ekapadāvirāj 1, anuṣṭubh 2, virāj 9, triṣṭubh 10

This first of the Vimada hymns starts with a single-pāda verse adapted from the first verse of X.25 and placed here to provide an auspicious beginning for the series. The second verse has a similarly marked beginning: its first two words are identical to the first words of the R̥gveda, I.1.1 *agním īḷe* "I invoke Agni. . . ." The hymn mostly treats the familiar topic of the physical presence of the ritual fire, though with some striking imagery and turns of phrase. The fire's expansion upward, even to heaven, is the

subject of the middle verses (4–6), with his expansion opening the way also for mortals and for gods. In the final summary verse (10) the poet Vimada names himself.

1. Make auspicious thought our familiar.
2. Agni do I invoke, the youngest, for delights, an ally [/Mitra] difficult to restrain by reason of his (own) command,
   upon whose foundation the mottled (cows) [=flames] honor the sun (as well as) the udder of their mother [=fireplace].
3. With his (own) body as his nest, his radiant beam his beacon, him whom they make increase with their mouth,
   he flashes—his teeth [=flames] in a row.
4. The way for the stranger and the clans goes onward, since he [=Agni] has reached the ends of heaven—
   as the bright-shining poet, (but also as) a cloud.
5. He takes pleasure in the oblations of the son of Manu. The craftsman stands erect at the sacrifice.
   Fixing his seat, he goes in front.
6. For he is peaceful dwelling, oblation, and sacrifice. By harkening only to him, their way goes onward:
   the gods (go) to Agni, who is equipped with axes [=flames].
7. I seek Agni, who dominates through sacrifice, and the friendship of (that) kindly ancient.
   They say that Āyu [=Agni] is the son of the stone.
8. Whichever superior men are from among us, they should all be "in the money"
   when they make Agni increase with their oblation.
9. Black, white, and red is his course; coppery, silver, and ruddy is glorious (Agni).
   The begetter has begotten him of golden form.
10. In just this way, o Agni, child of nourishment, Vimada, in company with the immortals, will convey to you his inspired thought
   and his songs, as he implores your good favors. Refreshment, nourishment, a good dwelling—all that have you brought.

X.21 (848) Agni

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
8 verses: āstārapaṅkti

This hymn is notable for two related formal features, its meter and its refrain. The meter āstārapaṅkti (8 8 / 8 4 8 4) is limited to this group of hymns attributed to Vimada, providing the meter for the two hymns X.21 and X.25 and the first half (vss. 1–3) of X.24. (The Anukramaṇī identifies the meter of the single verse X.170.4

as āstārapaṅkti, but the characteristic 8 4 8 4 sequence must be read as 12 12 there.) In all the Vimada occurrences the two four-syllable pādas form a grammatically unified refrain (the same refrain in all three hymns), interrupted by an eight-syllable pāda semantically and syntactically integrated into the rest of the verse: *ví vo máde* x x x x x x x x *vívakṣase* "In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods)." The first four-syllable pāda of the refrain is also a pun on the poet's name: *ví vo máde*, literally "in exhilaration you . . . ," but also "Vi . . . mada" (itself interrupted by the enclitic pronoun *vaḥ*). Although the effect is striking and insistent, it is also impossible to render in translation, and so the refrain has been unified and placed at the end of the verse. To illustrate the difficulties of a literal translation, we will give a rendering of the first verse in this hymn in that style:

> As if with (hymns) with their own twists, we choose you, Agni, as Hotar
> for our sacrifice whose ritual grass has been strewn—in exhilaration you (gods)—
> (we choose you,) sharp and pure-flamed—I wish to acclaim.

The formal novelty of the hymn is not matched by its content, which is simply a typical celebration of Agni's installation as Hotar at his kindling, along with wishes for his gifts of wealth.

1. As if with (hymns) with their own twists, we choose you, Agni, as Hotar
   for our sacrifice whose ritual grass has been strewn, (you,) sharp and pure-flamed.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. They beautify you—those close at hand who receive bounty in horses [=priests].
   The pouring(-ladle) pursues you, o Agni, as does the oblation whose course is straight.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. Those having (you) as their foundation [=flames] sit upon you, "pouring" with their tongues like women pouring with their ladles.
   Black and silver forms and all beauties do you put on.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
4. Whatever wealth you hold in regard, o Agni, you overpowering immortal,
   bring that here for us to win the prize, the bright (wealth) here to the sacrifices.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
5. When just born, Agni found all the poetic arts with (the aid of) the Atharvan (priest).
   He became the messenger of Vivasvant, dear and desirable to Yama.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

6. They invoke you at the sacrifices, o Agni, while the ceremony is proceeding.
   You provide all desirable goods to the pious man.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
7. They have installed you as the beloved priest at the sacrifices, o Agni,
   ghee-faced and blazing for Manu, most observant with your eyes.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
8. O Agni, with your blazing flame you spread yourself wide and lofty.
   Roaring, you act the bull; you set an embryo in your female kinsfolk [=plants].
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

X.22 (848) Indra

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
15 verses: purastādbr̥hatī, except anuṣṭubh 5, 7, 9, triṣṭubh 15

The metrical scheme of this hymn is unique in the R̥gveda (see Oldenberg 1888: 122); most of the verses have an 11 8 8 8 configuration (or something approaching it), despite the Anukramaṇī's identifications. Like many hymns whose meter is irregular, this one is driven more by phraseology, verbal echoes, and lexical chaining than by meter. The responsion and chaining begin with the first two verses, which consist of a rhetorical question about Indra's fame (vs. 1) and its answer (vs. 2).

The general praises of Indra continue in the next two verses, but shade, in verse 4, into the myth (or fragments of myth) that occupy most of the rest of the hymn: the journey of Indra and his client Kutsa (unnamed here) to the house of Uśanā (Kāvya) with the horses of the Wind (vss. 4–6), the plea to Indra to smite the demon Śuṣṇa (7–9), and the actual slaying of Śuṣṇa and its aftermath (vss. 10–11, 14), with several verses interspersed (12–13) begging Indra for aid and comfort. (These may belong to the Śuṣṇa saga and represent the speech of the same "we" who asked Indra to kill the demon in vss. 7–9, but they can also be generalized to the current "we" of singers and patrons.)

Although there are many puzzles in these mythological verses, the real crux is the pair concerning (apparently) the slaying of Śuṣṇa, verses 10–11, which contain several well-nigh-impenetrable hapaxes and whose syntax is in places unparsable. Verse 10, especially, may be deemed impossible, and its translation is therefore provisional and differs radically from others' interpretations. We believe that it contains a badly remembered and garbled allusion to an inherited Indo-Iranian mythic complex. The hapax *kārpāṇé*, which others interpret as "in the sword-combat" (relating it to a much later attested word *kr̥pāṇa* "sword"), we connect with the Avestan word *karapan* (read disyllabically in the Gāthās), the designation of a person or persons hostile to the Mazdayasnian religion and associated with equally hostile *kauui*s

(e.g., Yasna 44.20, Yasna 32.12, 14–15, Yasna 46.11)—just as our *kārpāṇé* occurs in a verse with unidentified (and, as it happens, syntactically untethered) *kavi*s. In the topsy-turvy religious system of the Gāthās, of course, entities viewed positively in the R̥gveda (like *kavi*s) have negative valuation. This is not the place to explore this hypothesis in detail, but for another apparent manifestation of this myth, see X.99.9, and for further discussion see Jamison (2009d [2013]).

The hymn ends with an impeccable triṣṭubh verse (15), containing a conventional invitation to Indra to drink the soma and conventional wishes for his good will and patronage.

1. Where is Indra famous? Among what people is he famed today like an ally among the people?—
   he who, whether in the dwelling place of the seers or in concealment, is constantly celebrated in song.
2. Here is Indra famed. Among us today he is praised as the wielder of the mace, equal to song—
   he who like an ally among the peoples has made glory for himself among the peoples, not by halves;
3. He who is the lord of great strength, not by halves, and of great manliness, the thruster,
   the bearer of the bold mace, like a father (of) his dear son.
4. As the one having yoked the two boisterous horses of the Wind, as god (having yoked those) of the god, o wielder of the mace,
   as the one who streams along the radiant path when set loose along the highways, he is praised.
5. You have come to just these two horses of the Wind, the silvery ones, to drive them by yourself,
   those for which no god nor mortal can be found as controller.
6. Then Uśanā asks you both [=Indra and Kutsa] on your coming, "With what purpose (have you come) to our house?
   You have come from afar, from heaven and earth, to a mortal."
7. You will ask for us, for our upraised sacred formulation, Indra.
   We (in return) beg you for this help, that you smite Śuṣṇa, the non-man.
8. The Dasyu of non-deeds, of non-thought, the non-man whose commandments are other, is against us.
   You smasher of non-allies, humble the weapon of this Dāsa.
9. (Be there) for us, Indra, o champion, with champions, and (let us be) aided by you, by your power.
   In many places offerings bellow to you in competition like battle cries.
10. You incited these excellent men at the obstacle-smiting for the Karpan [?], you mace-wielding champion,
    when (you found?) him [=Śuṣṇa] in hiding—the sage poets (being there), (profiting from) *the strength of your lordly power, *like the clans.

11. Right away these things (became) yours, Indra, on gaining control over (his) property for giving, you mace-wielding champion,
    when with your fellow travelers you humbled everything born of Śuṣṇa.
12. Let your good superior powers not go nowhere for us, champion Indra.
    May each one of us be in the favor of these (powers) of yours, mace-wielder.
13. For us let these (gifts?) of yours (become) real. They bring no injury— your caresses,
    whose benefits, like those of milk-cows, we would know, mace-wielder.
14. While, handless and footless, the earth grew strong through the powers of her wise ways,
    you, circling him with respectful circumambulation [=as if for the animal sacrifice], jabbed down Śuṣṇa for the whole of life.
15. Drink, drink the soma, hero Indra! Don't mean (us) harm, goods lord, since you are good.
    And protect the singers and the bounteous (patrons), and make us rich from (your?) great wealth.

X.23 (849) Indra

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
7 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 1, 7; abhisāriṇī 5 (so Anukramaṇī)

The hymn begins with a fine Indo-Iranian opening "we sacrifice to/worship (*yájāmahe*) Indra," reminiscent of the Younger Avestan litanies with the identical verb *yazamaide*. The praise of Indra that follows is fairly conventional; we hear of his mace (vss. 1, 3), his pair of fallow bays (vss. 1–3), and, less usually, his beard (vss. 1, 3). He is portrayed, in contrastive but complementary fashion, as at once warrior and generous and paternal patron (see, e.g., vss. 1d, 2b, 5).

The final two verses (6–7) mention the poet Vimada (7b) and his family (6a), and both verses feature prominently the verb *vidmá̄* "we know," a partial anagram of this name. Indra's name is also played upon, in the adjective *iná* "strong" (6c), and possibly, earlier in the hymn, by the presence of several pleonastic occurrences of the particle *íd* (3a, 4d). In the same spirit, the frequent occurrence of the preverb/particle *ví* seems designed to recall the Vimada name. This punning is more subtle and varied than that found in the Vimada hymns with the repeated catchword refrain *ví vo máde… vívakṣase* (X.21, 24.1–3, 25). Thus, though the contents of the praise are conventional, the playful phonological complexity gives texture to the poem.

1. We sacrifice to Indra with the mace in his right hand, the charioteer of the fallow bays who follow separate commandments.
   He stands erect, constantly shaking out his beard, while apportioning (goods) by virtue of his weapons, by virtue of his generosity.

2. His are the two fallow bays and the goods [=soma] to be found in the wood(en cup). Indra, the smiter of Vṛtra, shall be bounteous with his bounties.
   As Ṛbhu, Vāja, Ṛbhukṣa [=the three Ṛbhus] he masters his strength, (saying,) "I whet down even the name of the Dāsa."
3. When (he takes?) the golden mace, then he mounts the chariot, which his two fallow bays draw, along with the patrons—
   the bounteous one famed of old, Indra, master of the prize of long(-lasting) fame.
4. Even now, as rain he (sprinkles) all things belonging to his herd; Indra sprinkles his tawny beard.
   He pursues his track down to the honey having its lovely dwelling in the pressed soma. He tosses (his beard) upward like the wind a tree.
5. He who smote with his speech those of disputatious speech, those of insulting speech, and many thousands of the hostile,
   this and every (other) masculine deed of his do we sing—he who, like a father (his son), has strengthened his own force and strength.
6. The Vimadas have begotten this praise for you, Indra, (praise) unprecedented, best of many, for the one of good gifts [/drops],
   for we know the feeding of him, which is that of a strong one. May we bring him close like cowherds their livestock.
7. Let no one keep us away from this fellowship between you, Indra, and Vimada the seer,
   for we know your (fatherly) solicitude, o god, like that of kin. Let there be friendly fellowship of you for us.

X.24 (850) Indra (1–3), the Aśvins (4–6)

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
6 verses: āstārapaṅkti 1–3, anuṣṭubh 4–6

Two separate short hymns, distinguished by divinity, meter, contents, and style. The first three verses, to Indra, contain the Vimada refrain. (For a discussion of its structure see the introduction to X.21.) The poet straightforwardly asks for goods and aid from the god in return for the soma offered to him.

The second three verses, to the Aśvins, allude to an otherwise unknown or little-known myth in which these gods churn out a pair of females (which may or may not be magical fire-churning sticks), which fly away to the gods' disappointment; the gods ask the Aśvins to return them (vss. 4–5). If we knew the myth, it would no doubt be fascinating, but in the absence of further textual evidence, it must remain a tantalizing fragment.

1. O Indra, drink this honeyed soma pressed in the cup;
   lay down for us a foundation of wealth in thousands, o you of many goods.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. We beseech you with sacrifices, recitations, and oblations:
   o power-lord of power, set in place for us the best that can be chosen.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. You who are the lord of those things to be chosen, the invigorator of the weak,
   and the helper of the praisers, o Indra, protect us from hatred and constraint.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

4. O powerful ones, you two possessing magical powers churned out the two joined (fire-churning sticks?),
   when, reverently invoked by Vimada, you churned, o Nāsatyas.
5. All the gods yearned after the two joined (sticks?) as they flew away.
   The gods said to the Nāsatyas, "Bring (them) back again."
6. Honeyed is my going away and honeyed (my) coming again.
   O gods, do you two make us honeyed by your divinity.

X.25 (851) Soma

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
11 verses: āstārapaṅkti

The only Soma hymn in the Xth Maṇḍala, this hymn, like the others dedicated to Soma outside the IXth Maṇḍala, lacks reference to the ritual preparation of the soma drink, the theme that dominates the IXth Maṇḍala. In fact, there is almost no acknowledgement that soma is a ritual substance at all: just the phrase "the fellowship of the stalk" in verse 1, the identification of Soma as *máda* "exhilarating" in verse 10, and the refrain beginning "in . . . exhilaration" (*ví . . . máde*), itself a pun on the name of the poet Vimada (see introduction to X.21).

The Soma of this hymn is predominately a protector, benevolently forgiving childish transgressions on our part (vs. 3), watching over our possessions and ourselves (vss. 6–7), and guarding us from external threats (vss. 3, 7–10), as well as helping us cultivate our best qualities (vss. 1, 4). This Soma also presides over the distribution of desirable things, probably in the form of the priestly gift or dakṣiṇā. This aspect of Soma is first hinted at in verse 2, developed in verse 5, and triumphantly proclaimed in the final verse, 11.

The hymn contains some curious turns of phrase and slanted imagery, and so the mention of the great Ist Maṇḍala poet Kakṣīvant in verse 10 is not

altogether surprising. It is unclear whether the poet of this hymn is simply claiming Kakṣīvant's mantle or whether there is a family connection or even identity with Kakṣīvant.

The least clear part of the hymn is the second part of the final verse (11), where it is claimed that Soma will help the blind and the halt "for the seven." Soma's aid to the disabled is expressed in similar terms in VIII.79.2, another Soma hymn found outside of IX, but the identity of "the seven" in our verse is disputed, and the poet seems to have wanted to leave it open.

1. Make auspicious thought, skill, and resolve our familiars.
   Then in the fellowship of your stalk (o Soma, we will take pleasure), as cows take pleasure in a pasture.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
2. Touching your heart, they sit amid all your domains, Soma.
   Then these desires of mine spread out, seeking good things.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
3. And I transgress your commandments, Soma, through naïveté.
   So then, like a father to his son offer mercy to us; (guard us) against the fatal weapon.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
4. Our insights go forth together, like torrents into springs.
   Hold our resolve firm like beakers, o Soma, for us to live.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
5. Through the powers that belong to you who are clever and strong, o Soma,
   these insightful ones, avid, open the pen full of cows and horses.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
6. You protect our livestock, Soma, and the moving (world [=living creatures]) dispersed in many places.
   You gather them, for them to live, as you watch over all living beings
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
7. Soma, be our undeceivable herdsman on all sides.
   Ward off failures, o king; let no defamer hold sway over us.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
8. Soma, stay watchful as one of good resolve, to confer vital energy on us.
   As one who knows the territory better than man, protect us from deceit and from difficult straits.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
9. O drop that best smashes obstacles, you are for us Indra's benevolent comrade,
   when they call upon him in the conflict as they do battle at the winning of progeny.
   – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

10. Here he is: the exhilarating, overpowering one dear to Indra grows strong;
 he strengthens the thought of great Kakṣīvant, the inspired poet.
 – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).
11. He sends prizes of cows to the inspired poet, to the pious one.
 He, according to his wish, will advance the blind and the halt for the seven.
 – In my exhilaration I wish to acclaim you (gods).

X.26 (852) Pūṣan

Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prājāpatya, or Vasukr̥t Vāsukra
9 verses: anuṣṭubh, except uṣṇih 1, 4

Unlike most treatments of Pūṣan in the R̥gveda, with their generally simple but lively and colloquial language and concentration on Pūṣan's mundane activities, this hymn is bristling with difficulties, oddly constructed hapax compounds, and high, though frequently unclear, sentiments. See especially verse 6, whose language and intent are almost entirely obscure.

The general themes are Pūṣan's reciprocal relationship with inspired poets and their thoughts (see vss. 1–2, 4–5) and his role as companion and friend (see vss. 2, 5–8).

1. Because our inspired thoughts, the cherished teams, go forth toward (them),
 [/Because their cherished teams go forth toward our inspired thoughts,]
 let the two wondrous ones—(Vāyu,) who possesses a chariot with teams, and mighty Pūṣan—help (them).
2. He [=Pūṣan] to whom belong this greatness, the friendship with the Wind [/sought-after friendship], this people here—
 the inspired poet will strive to win (him) with his hymnic visions. He [=Pūṣan] has taken cognizance of the good praise hymns.
3. He knows the good praise hymns. Pūṣan the bull, like a drop,
 sprinkles sprinklings [?], sprinkles on our enclosure.
4. We would contemplate you. For us, god Pūṣan, (you are)
 both the means to realize our thoughts and to stir up our inspired poets,
5. Half-sharer of sacrifices, horse-driver of chariots,
 seer—he who was established by Manu as the companion who wards off (hatred) for the inspired poet—
6. The husband of her who cares [?] [=Sūryā?], (companion) of the gleaming (female [=Dawn?]) and the gleaming (male [=Agni, Soma, Sun?]),
 weaver of garments of sheep [=wool], always rubbing [=cleaning] the garments.

7. Powerful lord of prizes, powerful companion of prosperities,
   the delightful one has shaken forth his beard, shaken it out at will—he who is not to be deceived.
8. O Pūṣan, the goats should turn the pole of your chariot hither—
   (you are) the companion of every striving man, born of old, not to be driven away.
9. *Our* chariot let Pūṣan the mighty aid with his vigor.
   He will become the increaser of prizes; he will hear this call of ours.

The three hymns ascribed to Vasukra Aindra (X.27–29) are both very rich and very strange, and will repay concentrated study for untold time to come.

X.27 (853) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
24 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the most obscure and also one of the most intriguing hymns in the R̥gveda. In general and in its many particulars it has received a number of competing and conflicting treatments. We will restrict ourselves to presenting our own, often tentative, interpretation, without discussion of other possibilities that have been advanced.

First of all, in our opinion the hymn falls into two complementary units, verses 1–12 and 13–24, with the former subdivided into verses 1–7, 8–10, and 11–12 and the latter into verses 13–18 and 19–24. The overall theme of the whole hymn is the proper reciprocal relationship between men and gods, especially Indra, as symbolized by the sacrifice, and the proper functioning of the cosmos that this mutual relationship ensures. But this theme is treated in distinct ways in the course of the hymn.

The first half is primarily in dialogue between Indra and the singer. In it Indra contrasts the aid he gives to sacrificers with the destruction he metes out to non-sacrificers (vss. 1, 4), and the singer echoes Indra's contrastive pairing by announcing his intention to offer to Indra, as opposed to the self-aggrandizing atheists (vs. 2). Indra is somewhat skeptical of the singer's intent (vs. 3): he suggests that men sacrifice to him only when they need his help (3cd), but after he has helped them win, they forget to offer to him (3ab). Indra continues boasting about his powers (vs. 5), perhaps taken up by the singer (or still in the mouth of Indra himself; vs. 6), promising destruction to non-sacrificers. The singer's glorification of Indra's powers and the devastation he will produce ends this section (vs. 7).

The contrast between followers of Indra and their opposites is continued by another image in the next verses, the metaphor of lost and straying livestock. In verse 8 cows are wandering loose, grazing in the pasture of a stranger, though accompanied by a cowherd. In our view the cows stand for men, turning away from

devotion to "their own lord," Indra, to follow other ways and other leaders. In verse 9 Indra promises to reassemble his lost herd and reestablish proper relationships among them. The first half of verse 10 has the sound of a truth formulation, again announcing the reassembling of the herd, with the second half of the verse expressing the consequences for his weakened enemies, using the striking image of these enemies fighting Indra "with women," a phrase used elsewhere of about-to-be-defeated opponents (V.30.9; cf. I.104.3).

The mention of women in verse 10 may have prompted the coda verses 11–12, which treat the legal issue of the flawed woman given in marriage, known also from the later dharma literature (cf. Mānava Dharma Śāstra IX.72–73, VIII.205, 224). According to Manu a father is culpable if he tries to marry off a physically or mentally flawed girl without declaring her faults in advance, but if he has informed the bridegroom before the marriage, the latter has no legal recourse. Here verse 10 contrasts the suitor of a blind girl who knows she is blind (ab), with one who was tricked into marriage without that knowledge and who therefore has the right to deploy *mení* "the power of thwarted exchange." (For further discussion, see Jamison 1996b.) Verse 12 presents the opposite picture of an unflawed and happy bride, embodying the appropriate and successful functioning of the exchange relations that characterize Ārya society.

Thus, though this first half of X.27 utilizes three dominant images—sacrificers versus non-sacrificers, a unified herd following its herdsman versus dispersed and straying livestock, and a properly contracted marriage versus one that involves fraud and deception—all three contrast proper social relationships with aberrant ones, and warn of the consequences of the latter

The second half of the hymn seems superficially to have nothing to do with what went before, but viewed in the larger context it can be seen to pick up the first and most important image, that of sacrifice as the binding relationship between men and gods, and to develop it. The first six verses of this half (vss. 13–18) deal, in our view, with the creation of the sacrifice and the mystery of its central focus, the fire. This section begins with two riddling verses (13–14) identifying the fire without naming it: verse 13 of the already kindled fire and verse 14 of its creation by the "lofty steed" without shadow or foliage, probably the fire-churning spindle (later *pramantha*), and the mother, probably the lower fire stick (*aráṇī*) with a hole in which the spindle is turned and from which the "embryo," the fire itself, emerges. The second half of this verse describes the oblation, conceived of as a cow, "licking the calf (that is, the fire) of another (that is, the fire stick)" when poured into the fire. The creation of the fire is also treated in verse 16, with much of the same lexicon, but with the addition of the ten fingers, which manipulate the fire-making apparatus.

In between is an enigmatic verse (15) about unidentified but numerically precise groups coming from different directions. In our view this treats the original establishment of the sacrifice through the cooperation of various prototypical Ārya communities (perhaps including the Seven Seers, the Navagvas, and the Daśagvas).

This theme is continued, though somewhat enigmatically, in verse 17, but in verse 18 there is schism: two groups go off in opposite directions and follow opposite customs, cooking versus non-cooking. It is the cooks and their fire who are predicted to prevail. With this we return to the stark divisions of the first half of the hymn between sacrificers and non-sacrificers. The split depicted in verse 18 also reminds us of the fuller treatment of sacrificial schism in I.33.4–10.

If the first eighteen verses of this hymn are fiendishly difficult, the last six (19–24) might properly be termed impossible—not so much because of their grammar, but because of the rare words, the obscurity of the references, and the unclarity of the relationships of the verses to each other and to the rest of the hymn. The interpretation that follows is even more tentative than what has preceded. The first two verses of this section (19–20) seem to be riddles turning on astronomical or temporal references. The first may refer to the year and its component parts ("the horde") turning by itself and regularly bringing an end to the mortal generations while renewing itself. The "two oxen of the Pulverizer" (death or old age?) in verse 20 could perhaps be another temporal reference, to night and day as similarly measuring out the lifespan of humans, beneath the eternal world of heaven and the heavenly bodies. This theme appears to be continued in the first half of the next verse (21), though what the "mace" (*vájra*) represents here is entirely unclear—perhaps the year or other temporal division as a weapon that smites mortals. The second half of this verse seems to offer a less bleak picture than the inevitable decay and destruction that temporal divisions bring in their train: there is "other fame," to which old age can lead, though what that fame is or is based on is not stated.

If we are correct, the implicit answer to this question is the sacrifice and its center, fire, and this answer is given obliquely in verse 22. Fire the substance is always potentially present, but not always actually present, and so it appears to defy the temporally defined progress to old age and death. Latent "within every tree," it can burst forth at any time. It is frightening in some of its effects (the flames as "man-eating birds") and strikes terror in all beings (pāda c), but is also the benevolent focus of sacrifice (pāda d). The original establishment of the sacrifice by the gods seems to be treated in verse 23, and in the thoroughly obscure last pāda of that verse Indra, unnamed, may come himself to the sacrifice for epiphany, thus returning us to the beginning of the hymn and the direct involvement of Indra with sacrificers.

The last verse is no clearer than the preceding ones, though it seems to be announcing a final, instructive truth according to which one should lead one's life. Perhaps the idea is that the sacrifice is the means to life, which connects one to the eternal world of heaven and the sun. The destructive temporal forces mentioned earlier (vss. 20–21) were "below the sun," but in this final verse the sun reveals itself, hides the mist (if that's what the phonologically problematic hapax *busá* means), and reaches its "foot" (a sunbeam going toward the ground?) out to be seen, thus providing a potential bond for the sacrificing mortal to the higher world. This shaft

of light, liberated from its covering, that ends the hymn, seems an optimistic promise to the addressee of better things than decay and death.

But much of this is poorly supported speculation, and the hymn, especially the final verses of the hymn, invites further detailed investigation.

1. [Indra:] I will really "boil over," singer, when I do my best for the presser, the sacrificer.
   But I am a smiter of the one who gives no milk-mixture, who injures the true, who seeks crooked ways—the nullity.
2. [Singer:] When I will drive together for battle those who do not follow the gods, puffing themselves up in their bodies,
   at home I will cook you a bulging bull; I will pour down sharp soma fifteen-fold.
3. [Indra:] I do not know anyone who speaks thus, *after* he has smashed the godless ones in the clash.
   When he has caught sight of the mettlesome clash, only then do they proclaim two bulls to me (as offering).
4. [Indra:] When I was in communities unknown, they all were bounteous to me, since I was really there.
   But truly I despoil the nullity even if he is here at peace, as I destroyed the one on the mountain [=Vr̥tra?], having grasped him by the foot.
5. [Indra:] Truly they do not confine me in (just one) community, nor do the mountains (confine me), when I am minded.
   (Even) one with a stunted ear will be afraid of my roar. Just so, day after day the dust will stir.
6. [Indra? Singer?:] He will now see those here who drink the cooked (milk oblation) and who serve the foreleg without (offering to) Indra, and those who play the lord's role for an arrow,
   or who have scorned their ardent comrade. The wheel-rims should now roll over them!
7. [Singer:] You have come into being, you have grown strong, and you have traversed your lifetime. Now (the opponent) in front will shatter; the one behind will shatter now.
   The two covers [=heaven and earth] do not encompass him who has labored on the far shore of this airy realm.
8. [Singer:] The cows, dispersed, ate the grain of the stranger. I saw them roaming with their cowherd.
   The cries of the stranger came together from all sides. For how long will their own lord find pleasure in them [=cows]?
9. [Indra:] When I will round up those that eat the grass and grain of the peoples all together in a wide pasture,
   then a yoked (animal) will seek an unhitcher, while he who longs to will yoke an unyoked one.

10. [Indra:] And just then you will consider this truly spoken by me—that I shall bring the two-footed and the four-footed together.
    Whoever then will fight the bull [=Indra] with women, I, who cannot be combatted, will share out his possessions.

11. (A father) who has a daughter blind from birth—who, knowing her (as) blind, will have designs on her [/will be hostile (to him=the father)]?
    (On the other hand, not knowing her state), which of the two will unleash (the power of) violated exchange against him [=the father]—the one who marries her or the one who woos her (on the bridegroom's behalf)?
12. How different is the maiden, gratified all around by an admirable (gift) worthy to be chosen, from a bride-seeking man from among the young bloods?
    She becomes a fortunate bride, when she is well adorned. She wins herself an ally [=spouse] in public.

13. He has swallowed (it [=firewood]) from the foot; he eats what's in front of him. He has set out head upon head [=his flames], as his shield.
    Sitting, he destroys the (kindling stick) erect in his lap; bending downward, he goes along the upstretching earth.
14. Lofty but without a shadow and without foliage is the steed [=kindling stick]. The mother [=lower fire stick] stands still; unloosed the embryo eats.
    Licking the calf of another, she [=oblation] lows. In what form did the milk-cow deposit her udder?
15. Seven heroes [=Seven Seers?] came up from the south, eight from the north: they joined together.
    Nine [=Navagvas?] with grain sacks [?] came from the west, ten [=Daśagvas?] in the east traverse the back of the rock.
16. One brownish one [=fire], common to the ten (fingers)—they spur on to decisive resolve.
    The mother bears the embryo well-placed in her belly—him seeking after nothing, she being content.
17. The heroes cooked a fat ram; there were dice strewn down for gaming.
    Two roam the lofty steppe [=heaven?], provided with filters, purifying (soma?) in the waters.
18. Shrieking, they went apart in opposite directions: one half will cook, for the other half does not cook.
    This god Savitar here says this to me, "Only he whose food is wood, whose food is melted butter will win."

19. I saw the horde [=year?] on the move from afar, turning by its own power, without a wheel.

It escorts forward the generations of peoples of the stranger,
diminishing their "tails" at the same time as transforming itself
ever anew.

20. These two oxen of the Pulverizer [=old age? death?] have been yoked for me. Do not drive (them) forth; wait just an instant.
The waters also come through to the goal of this one, and he has come into being as the Harmer below the sun.
21. This is the mace that has been rolled out in many ways, below the fullness of the lofty sun.
But there exists other fame beyond this. Unwaveringly, old age crosses to it.
22. Held in check within every tree, the cow [=fire?] will bellow. From there the man-eating birds [=flames?] will fly forth.
Then all this creation here will be afraid, though pressing (soma) for Indra and doing its best for the seer.
23. The first of the gods stood still at the measuring (of the sacrificial ground?); the later ones of them came up from the cutting (of it).
Three marshy places [=fire hearths?] heat the earth; the two (horses?) convey the "stammerer" [?] [=Indra?] to the fullness (of the sacrifice? of the sun?).
24. This is your means of life. And know this—don't hide away such a thing in the clash—
when the sun reveals itself, it hides the mist [?]. Its "foot" is released as if from a garment.

X.28 (854) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
12 verse: triṣṭubh

Another devilish hymn by the very talented Vasukra, and a worthy companion-piece to X.27. Like the first half of X.27, this hymn consists of a dialogue between Indra and a singer/sacrificer, introduced in this case by a verse spoken by the sacrificer's wife (who then disappears from the hymn). The hymn is more tightly structured than X.27, and it complements X.27 in another way: though the second half of X.27 is deliberately obscure and esoteric in its expression, X.28 presents itself (however misleadingly) as instruction to the simple, couched in straightforward language.

The topic of the hymn, to be reductionist, is successful and unsuccessful sacrifices, and the human participants in the dialogue seem to express anxiety about failing, perhaps by accident, to provide a sacrificial offering adequate to attract the gods, especially Indra. The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the sacrificer's wife, who is

also Indra's daughter-in-law, anxiously noting Indra's absence from the sacrifice. In verse 2 Indra responds that he protects those who provide him adequate soma; the singer (probably) replies, perhaps a bit testily, that not only do they press soma and cook bulls for Indra, but Indra does consume this provender (vs. 3).

There follows an abrupt change of subject, or at least change of tone. Indra begins verse 4 with "Mark well this (speech) of mine, singer" and then alludes glancingly to what appear to be animal fables of the sort found in much later texts like the Pañcatantra. In verse 5 the mortal expresses doubt about his ability to understand the god because of his (the mortal's) simple nature, but also expresses certainty that the god will enlighten him at the right time. The next three verses (6–8) we will take up below. The animal fables return in verses 9 and 10, while the last two verses (11–12) contrast greedy people, who consume what was destined for the sacrifice and thereby actually weaken themselves, with the hard-laboring sacrificers, who thrive.

The hymn is thus structured in the following way: the outer verses (1–3, 11–12) concern successful and unsuccessful sacrifices and sacrificers, the opening verses being more personal, the final ones more general. Within this frame there is an inner ring of verses (4–5, 9–10), which establish a dialogue between mortal and god about this problem and which express the god's teaching in the simple terms a mortal can understand, that is, in animal allegories briefly alluded to. This double ring of complementary verses thus surrounds and marks out the center of the hymn, verses 6–8, and especially the exact center of the twelve-verse hymn, verses 6–7. These two verses are also rhetorically responsive, and both their position and their structure define them as an omphalos. Furthermore, they are uttered directly after the singer has expressed certainty that Indra will proclaim his doctrine at the right time (vs. 5cd). Everything in the context seems to mark these verses as the direct teaching of Indra, his significant message—and, indeed, as his epiphany, the epiphany that was expected but not realized in verse 1. The vaunting self-praise in the omphalos verses contrasts strangely with the animal fable verses that form the inner ring around them, for in those the message seems to be rather that the weak can best the strong.

The re-transition from the ātmastuti ("self-praise") of the omphalos (vss. 6–7) to the animal fables (vss. 9–10) is effected by an even more enigmatic verse (8). Though it does not match any of the structurally paired verses of the rest of the hymn, it may carry the key to the whole, for it seems to treat the original establishment of the sacrifice, instituted first by the gods. This reminds us of the more elaborate treatment of the origins of the sacrifice in X.27.13–18 (esp. 15), and it also suggests that the sacrifice is the tool by which the weak (currently mortals) may control the strong (Indra and the gods), as in the animal fables that enclose the hymn's center. Reached by way of a playful transition (vss. 10d, 11a), the final two verses (11–12) return us to the present day and the ritual situation, and remind us of the contrast between sacrificers and non-sacrificers in the first half of X.27, especially verses 2 and 7.

A word about the animal verses. Despite the major importance of animal fables and allegories in later Sanskrit, there is essentially nothing like them in

Vedic, especially early Vedic, and even the allusions to stories we have here—which are reminiscent of the summary verses of Pañcatantra tales—are unique in the Ṛgveda. Keeping in mind that animal stories are not told in later Sanskrit simply to amuse, but are overtly instructive and educational, especially for callow and wayward youth, we can connect the use of these allusions in this hymn to the singer's self-description as "a simple man," incapable of understanding Indra's message (vs. 5). Indra is tailoring his instruction to the mental abilities of his hearer: rather than express himself in the usual mysteries of Ṛgvedic high style (as in the immediately preceding X.27), Indra packages his message in a series of beast fables. If this reading of the hymn's general scenario is correct, then we must assume already for the Ṛgvedic period not only the existence of a body of story literature, of animal fables, but also (more interestingly) a fairly organized functional role for this literature in an instructional setting, conforming to the same model that we find quite a bit later in Indic literature in general. And this in turn may lead us to reconsider the standard views of the history of Indian literature and especially the connections between Vedic and Classical genres.

For further discussion of this hymn, see Jamison (2004a; 2007: 80–83; 2008b).

1. [Sacrificer's wife:] While every other stranger has come here, only my
 father-in-law has not come here.
 He should eat the roasted grains and he should drink the soma. Well-fed
 he should then go home again.
2. [Indra:] The sharp-horned bull [=soma] continually bellowing has
 mounted to the height (of heaven), upon the expanse of the earth.
 In all communities I protect him who, having pressed the soma, fills both
 my cheeks.
3. [Singer/Sacrificer:] With a stone they press the exhilarating, powerful
 soma-drinks for you, Indra. You drink of them.
 They cook bulls for you. You eat of them—coming when you are
 summoned with nourishment, bounteous one.
4. [Indra:] Mark well this (speech) of mine, singer: The rivers carry the
 flotsam against their current.
 The fox crept up on the lion, his opponent; the jackal sprang on the boar
 from out of the underbrush.
5. [Singer/Sacrificer:] How shall I mark this (speech) of yours—I, a simple
 man, mark the inspired thought of you who are clever and strong?
 You who know will declare to us at the proper time toward which half
 your chariot-pole is to come to rest, bounteous one.
6. [Indra:] Because in this way they grow me strong, higher even than lofty
 heaven is my chariot-pole.
 Many thousands do I "grind down" all at once, for the begetter begot me
 as one without rival.

7. [Indra:] Because in this way they begot [/knew] me as strong and powerful, at every action (calling) "o Indra" (to me,) the bull—the gods (did this)—
   I smashed Vṛtra with the mace, while exhilarated; I opened up the enclosure through my greatness for the pious one.
8. [Indra:] The gods came; they carried axes; hewing the trees, they advanced with their clans toward (the ritual ground),
   depositing the good wood in the belly [=the hearth(s) of the ritual fires]. Where there is brushwood [?], they [=flames?] burn it up.
9. [Indra:] The hare swallowed the razor coming toward it. I split apart a rock with an earth clod from afar.
   Even a lofty one shall I weaken for a weakling. The calf, swelling up, will pursue the bull.
10. The eagle caught its talon just so, like a lion entrapped into a snare.
   The buffalo also got trapped, when it was thirsty. The monitor-lizard plowed this way for him.
11. The monitor-lizard will plow *this* way for those who taunt the brahmins with their food.
   The very same ones eat the released oxen, themselves breaking their powers, their own bodies.
12. But these (others) have become very fortunate by their ritual labors—the ones who urged themselves on at the soma(-pressing) with their hymns.
   Speaking manfully, measure out prizes to us; in heaven you have established your fame, your name as "hero."

X.29 (855) Indra

Vasukra Aindra
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Shorter than Vasukra's other two hymns, but no less daunting in the intricacy of its expression, especially in verse 1, which displays phonological, morphological, and syntactic tricks too numerous and too dense to discuss in detail here. (See Jamison [forthcoming c].) Suffice it to say that the verse manages to refer, by indirection and implication, to the five most important gods at the dawn ritual: Agni, Indra, Vāyu, and the Aśvins, though only Indra is named. (Dawn is the sole important divinity absent, but she appears in the first pāda of the next verse.) Besides the common Ṛgvedic habit of employing words applicable to two or more referents, the verse shows in embryo a device prized in later kāvya: that of allowing a single phonological sequence to be read in two of more different ways by means of variant word divisions. Add to this an unprecedented syntactic

construction, which is also a syntactic pun, and dizziness ensues for the hearer/reader.

The structure and thematic contents of the hymn are less clear than in X.27 and 28, however. After the first two extremely opaque verses, which appear to treat the dawn ritual and the divine conjunction of Indra and Agni (and probably of the two Aśvins), the poet turns his hopes and attention to attracting Indra to show himself at the sacrifice, to produce an epiphany (see esp. vs. 4), through properly performed offerings. There are a number of obscurities in these verses as well, especially verse 5, and the lack of a perceptible structure hampers our efforts to clarify them. Much remains to be excavated from this rich poetic mine.

1. Whether he takes pleasure in the wood or not, he [=Agni] has been installed (as priest) [/been deposited (in the wood)]. The gleaming praise has waked you two, o bustling ones [=Aśvins, or Agni and Indra]—
   (the praise) in which Indra (took pleasure) on many days (as did) the Hotar [=Agni]—(each being) the manly one, best man among men, earth-protector.
2. At the forefront of this dawn here and of the later one, might we be at the manly prancing of you [=Indra], who are the best man of men.
   Triśoka [/the three-flamed one (=Agni)] brought a hundred men here (on the same chariot) with Kutsa—the chariot that will be victorious.
3. Which exhilarating drink is to be enjoyed by you, Indra? As powerful one, run to my hymns through the doors.
   When (will) the vehicle, (that is,) the inspired thoughts, (come) near to me? I would compel you here to highest generosity with (my offerings of) food.
4. When (will) the brilliance of one such as you (come) to our men, Indra? With which hymnic vision will you equip yourself? When will you come to us,
   (to be) actually present like an ally, o wide-ranging one, for our offering—though there could be inspired thoughts at anybody's food (offering)?
5. As the sun sends (each man) forth to his task, do you send forth, (like a boat) to the further shore, those who go, each to his own desire, as if going to the providers of wives,
   and those men who seek to empower their many hymns for you, powerfully born Indra, along with their (offerings of) food.
6. The two copious "measures," heaven and earth, are now well fixed by your might, by your poetic skill.
   Let the ghee-rich pressed soma-drinks be to your liking, let the honey-drinks be in sweetness for your drinking.

7. They poured out a tankard of honey for him, a full one for Indra, for he is one whose generosity is real.
   He has grown strong on the expanse of the earth, the manly one pre(eminent) through his will and his masculine powers.
8. The very powerful Indra has penetrated the battling hosts. The many (hosts) marshal themselves for him, for his comradeship.
   Mount upon the hosts like a chariot that you will spur on with auspicious benevolence.

Hymns X.30–34 are attributed to Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, though Oldenberg (1888: 234–35) entertains the possibility that this group should be joined with the Vasukra hymns that precede on the basis of shared phraseology.

X.30 (856) Waters or Apām Napāt

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
15 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is very ritually determined, and in fact it tracks closely the ritual acts performed in the classical śrauta ritual at its recitation in the soma sacrifice. In verses 1–3 the Adhvaryu priests are sent to fetch water for the soma-pressing, but first make an offering to the waters and the Child of the Waters (Apām Napāt). The Adhvaryus then bring the waters to the sacrificial ground (vss. 4–9), with a reminder that they (the waters) owe a favor to Indra, the principal drinker of soma, because he freed them (vs. 7). More praise of the waters follows (vss. 10–12) as they approach the place of sacrifice. They arrive in verses 13–14, and the pressing can begin in verse 15.

The feminine and enthusiastically yielding nature of the waters (the stem *áp* being feminine in gender) and their relationship to various masculine forces, the Adhvaryus (vs. 2), Soma (vss. 5–6), and the gods (vs. 15), are also emphasized.

1. Let the course for our sacred formulation go forth to the waters that are among the gods, as if by the harnessing of mind,
   to the great wellspring of Mitra and Varuṇa. I will make the well-twisted (hymn) subject to that which possesses broad expanse [=waters?].
2. O Adhvaryus, since you have become provided with oblations, go to the eager waters, o eager ones—
   (the waters) upon which the ruddy eagle gazes down. Harness the wave today, o you of skillful hands.
3. O Adhvaryus, go to the waters, to the sea. Sacrifice with your oblation to the Child of the Waters.
   He will give you the well-purified wave today. For him press the honeyed soma,

4. (For him) who shines without kindling wood within the waters, whom the inspired poets call upon at the ceremonies.
   O Child of the Waters, give the honeyed waters by which Indra grows strong for his heroic deed,
5. By which Soma is delighted and becomes excited, like a young blood with lovely young women.
   Go forth to these waters, o Adhvaryu. When you will pour (them) in, then purify (them) with plants.
6. Just in that way young women accede to a young man, when he goes to them who are eager as he is eager.
   They are agreed in mind and they perceive alike—the Adhvaryus, the Holy Place, and the divine waters.
7. He who made wide space for you who were blocked, he who freed you from the great curse,
   to him, to Indra, propel your honeyed wave that exhilarates the gods, o waters.
8. Propel to him the honeyed wave, which is your embryo, o rivers, and is a fountain of honey—
   (the wave) with ghee on its back, worthy of invocation at the ceremonies. Rich waters, hear my call.
9. Rivers, propel the exhilarating wave providing drink to Indra, which rouses both (races? [=gods and men]),
   (the wave) arousing exhilaration, stemming from the *uśānā*-plant, born of a cloud, the fountain that spreads widely around the triple-threaded (sacrifice?).
10. Those whirling about in two streams, roving like cattle-raiders in teams,
   the begetters and masters of existence—the waters grown strong together sharing the same womb: o seer, now extol them!
11. Impel our ceremony by a sacrifice to the gods; impel our sacred formulation to gain the spoils.
   At the yoking of truth unloosen your udder. Grant us attentive hearing, o waters.
12. O rich waters, because you hold sway over the good, and you bring favorable resolve and the immortal (soma?),
   and you are masters of wealth that brings good progeny, let Sarasvatī establish this vital energy for the singer.
13. As the waters have just appeared in front—on their way here, bringing ghee, milk, and honey,
   allying in mind with the Adhvaryus, bringing the well-pressed soma to Indra—
14. They have now arrived here, rich and bringing spoils for the living. O Adhvaryus, comrades, make them take their seats;
   set these down on the ritual grass, you (comrades) in soma, these who are allied with the Child of the Waters.

15. The eager waters have come here to this ritual grass. Seeking the gods,
    they have taken their seats at the ceremony.
  Adhvaryus, press the soma for Indra. The sacrifice to the gods has
    become easy for you to master.

X.31 (857) All Gods

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

An extremely obscure hymn. As in many such compositions, one of the major sources of obscurity is the uncertainty of the referents in many key verses and the possibility of multiple referents in such cases. The interpretation given here is tentative and uncertain, and even if correct, or partially so, it does not exclude other possible interpretations. In our view, the hymn speculates about the mystery of the sacrifice, about the relations between men and gods that the sacrifice encodes, and about Agni, the most conspicuous symbol of the sacrifice and the mortal–immortal partnership, as the foundational principle of the cosmos and the neutralization of the distinction between space and time. Although assigned to the All Gods, this is obviously not a conventional All God hymn (if such exist) but one for which the designation serves as a cover for mystic speculation. If it has a conventional deity, it is Agni.

The hymn begins innocently enough with four verses establishing the ritual scene. However, even in the first verse we encounter something unusual: the raw material of the sacrifice seems to be seeking *us* out, as if the gods themselves were assisting us in our duties toward them. Nonetheless, verse 2 asserts that the mortal sacrificer must exert his own inherent powers in order to perform a proper sacrifice and receive its benefits. The happy result of the mutual action of men and gods (note the latter are called "helpers" in 3b) is expressed in verse 3, and in verse 4 (particularly full of unidentified referents; see esp. pāda d) it seems that the central divine figure Agni is well pleased and that other gods have favored the sacrificer as well.

Verses 5–6 are roughly the center of the hymn (especially since vs. 11 is a pseudo-dānastuti); they are verbally responsive (note the *asyá* beginning 5c, 6a, and 6c, for example), and they introduce a larger cosmic dimension to the depiction of the sacrifice. They thus qualify as an omphalos. Most important in these two verses are the three words for "earth" that knit them together: *kṣā́ḥ* in 5a, *bhū́man* in 6b, and, by implication, *pr̥thvī́*, disguised in the feminine participle *paprathānā́* in 6a, derived from the same root (*prath*) as *pr̥thvī́* in 9a. (The three words—*kṣā́ḥ, bhū́man*, and *pr̥thvī́*—are reunited again in vs. 9, a good indication that the conjunction in vss. 5–6 was deliberate.) This emphasis on the earth in a ritual context seems to make an implicit claim that the sacrificial ground *is* the earth. In verse 5 the sacrificial context is more overt: this seems to concern the distribution of the dakṣiṇās or

priestly gifts at dawn. Verse 6 is more opaque, but in our view refers to the benevolence of a well-pleased Agni radiating outward. The second half of verse 6 provides a transition to the cosmic speculations that follow: the "lord" of 6a seems still to be Agni, with his womb containing, on the one hand, his flames, and, on the other hand perhaps, the gods.

The speculations of verses 7–10 begin, as often, with an unanswerable question about the origins of the cosmos. Verse 7 also contrasts the stable and unchanging quality of heaven and earth (space) with the ever-changing and aging aspect of time. This opposition in a way provides the framework for the next few verses, although the direct connection between 7 and what follows is superficially dim. However, if, as we believe, the next three verses (8–10) concern Agni, he partakes of both space and time, and provides the foundation for both. He supports heaven and earth (8b)—there is no reason to look elsewhere (8a)—but he is also in constant motion (8cd, 9ab) and appears in many guises (9cd). He thus grounds the stability of the spatial cosmos while being in constant motion through it. In the same way (vs. 10), temporal aging is represented by his regular rebirth, but because of the paradox that he is born before his parents, temporal advance is negated. The space/time conundrum is solved! The last clause of verse 10, "if they should inquire" / "when they shall ask," is in our view the formal closure to the cosmic speculation opened by a question in verse 7 and not confined to the themes of verse 10.

The final verse (11) has all the trappings of a dānastuti, appended to the hymn, but it seems to refer to a very obscure saga also encountered in I.117.8, an Aśvin hymn.

1. Let the laud of the gods, the means of sacrifice, come in quest of us, to
   help us, along with all the overpowering ones [=gods].
   Might we come to have good fellowship with them. Might we be those
   who cross over all difficulties.
2. A mortal should await material wealth along the path of truth; he should
   seek to win it through reverence.
   And he should consult with his own resolve and grasp better skill with
   his mind.
3. The insightful thought has been set in place; the (sacrificial) portions
   have been sent surging. The helpers [=gods] come close to the
   wondrous one [=Agni] as if to a ford.
   We have attained the fortifying (hymn) for our good faring; we have
   become cognizant of the immortals.
4. Our own constant lord and master of the house [=Agni?] should
   find pleasure (in him [=sacrificer?]) for whom the god Savitar has
   given birth,
   or Bhaga and Aryaman should anoint him with cows. That one seems
   beloved to him, and so he should be.

5. Might this earth here be like (the place) of the dawns. When the possessors of livestock [=gods? patrons?] have assembled here with their strength,
   desiring to partake of the praise of this singer, let the powerful prizes approach us.
6. The good favor of just this one, spreading out, became the foremost cow throughout the land;
   in the womb of this lord are those of the same nest, being borne in the same burden.
7. What was the wood, and what the tree from which they carved out heaven and earth,
   the two that stand together, unaging and enduring? But the days, the many dawns, grow old.
8. There does not exist another of such kind beyond that. The ox bears heaven and earth.
   With a will of his own, he makes his skin into a purifier, when they convey him, as the tawny (horses) do the sun.
9. Like a snake [?], he passes over the wide earth; as wind (blows) away mist, he blows across the land,
   where, being anointed as Mitra and as Varuṇa, like a fire in the forest, he has let loose his flame.
10. When the barren cow [=kindling stick] gave birth all at once as she was being driven/anointed, she, though faltering, did so unfalteringly, since she has her own herdsmen [=priests].
    When the son [=Agni] was born before his two parents [=kindling sticks], the cow [=lower stick] swallowed the peg [=upper stick]—if they should inquire.
11. They say that Kaṇva is the son of Nr̥ṣad [/of the one who sits among men], and Śyāva [/the dusky], the prizewinner, took the stakes.
    The gleaming udder swelled for Kr̥ṣṇa [/the black one], but in there no one made the truth swell for him.

X.32 (858) Indra

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
9 verses: jagatī 1–5, triṣṭubh 6–9

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn to Indra, in fact the hymn falls into two separate parts, defined by both meter and content. The first five verses in jagatī are indeed Indra's, but the last four verses (6–9) in triṣṭubh are more appropriate to Agni. However, these two parts fit together into a larger thematic whole.

The verses dedicated to Indra follow to some degree a conventional "journey" hymn trajectory: Indra's pair of horses bring him to the sacrifice in verse 1, with the journey further described in verse 2. Verse 4 appears to concern the focal point of the sacrifice, the sacrificial ground or, more precisely, the fire altar, to which all the sacrificial participants and substances make their way. A two-way journey is foreseen in verse 5, with Soma (if this identification is correct) on his way to the gods, and Indra and companion gods on the way to the sacrifice.

Several features disturb this simplistic sketch of the hymn. First, the journey is also conceived of as a wedding journey; in addition to verse 3 (to be discussed) see especially the "wooers" in verse 1 and the bridal procession in verse 4. Moreover, the middle verse of this portion of the hymn, verse 3, has a pronounced omphalos character. It announces itself as a wonder, and then produces three striking paradoxes: the son who knows his parents' birth (pāda b), the wife who conveys her husband on the bridal journey (pāda c), and the same role reversal seen from the husband's point of view, a bridal procession made for the man (pāda d). It is difficult to know exactly what to make of this, but it appears that Indra's journey to the sacrifice is being imagined as the wedding journey of a bride. The hyper-virile Indra is in some sense filling the passive role of bride—a fine conceit, though one that the poet does not over-emphasize.

The focus on the "seat" in verse 4, quite possibly the hearth, as well as the first paradox of verse 3, the son who knows his parents' birth, a typical Agni trope, turn our attention to that god in the second part of the hymn. The installation and kindling of the ritual fire are the subject, and the mythic model is the well-known tale of Agni's flight, concealment in the waters, and recovery (vs. 6ab). The narrator owes his knowledge of this to Indra (6cd); in verse 7 he makes a general statement about the value of instruction for the uninitiated. This short sequence is reminiscent of nearby X.28, in which Indra acts as the instructor of the callow. Verse 8 returns to Agni and describes the kindling of a dormant fire. The enigmatic verse 9 presents itself as a sort of reverse dānastuti, though with the identity of the speakers being somewhat unclear.

1. The two (horses) are come, those in the power of the one being conjured
 up by our insights [=Indra]—(they are come) to the wooers taking
 their seats in front along with (the other) wooers.
 Indra will find pleasure in both (offerings) of ours when he will take
 cognizance of the soma-stalk.
2. O much-praised Indra, you drive across the heavenly luminous realms
 and across the earthly ones through the airy space.
 Those who convey you in an instant right up to the ceremonies, let them
 vanquish the ungenerous ones who chatter.
3. Just this will appear to me as more wondrous than any wonder: that the
 son knows by heart the birth of his parents.
 The wife conveys the husband amid the uproar; just for the man an
 auspicious bridal procession has been made ready.

4. Just this dear seat do I ponder, to which the milk-cows will direct (their journey) like a bridal procession,
   as will the foremost mother of the flock, a wise counselor, and the sevenfold people of the music.
5. Seeking the gods (he [=Soma?]) has left a track on his way toward you. The one who alone surpasses [=Indra] drives with the Rudras,
   or among the immortals among whom old age is for giving. Pour honey all around for your helpers.

6. The protector of the commandments of the gods has announced to me that the one who was hidden in the waters [=Agni] is (now) being installed.
   Because knowing Indra kept you in his sights, instructed by him have I come here, o Agni.
7. Because the one not knowing the field asked the field-knower, he goes forth, instructed by the field-knower—
   this, truly, is the good of instruction—and he finds the straight course.
8. Just today did he [=Agni] breathe. He waited (all) these days; covered over, he sucked his mother's udder.
   Old age has reached the youth. No (longer) angry, the good one has become of favorable mind.
9. Might we do these auspicious things in giving bounties, o wooden vessel, o Kuruśravaṇa.
   Let this be a gift just for you, bounteous ones, and this soma here, which I bear in my heart.

X.33 (859) Lament of a Singer [Anukramaṇī: All Gods 1, Indra 2–3, Dānastuti of Kuruśravaṇa Trāsadasyava 4–5, Upamaśravas Mitrātithiputra 6–9]

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
9 verses: triṣṭubh 1, br̥hatī 2, satobr̥hatī 3, gāyatrī 4–9

A poignant yet proud 1st-person lament of a poet whose patron has died, the hymn also serves as a sort of job application to his erstwhile patron's son. The progress of the poem is marked by changes in meter. In the first verse the poet remembers his former privileged position and, in its last pāda, the sudden advent of disaster. The next two verses (a pragātha) describes his present miserable state (in terms found also in part in I.105.8) and begs Indra for help. In the last six verses, in gāyatrī, the poet first recalls how he "chose" (a telling expression) his former patron Kuruśravaṇa (vss. 4–6). He then introduces himself to the son, Upamaśravas (vs. 7), but returns in the final two verses (8–9) to his helpless sorrow over the death of his patron and companion.

1. The advance teams of the peoples hitched me up in front. As always, I carried Pūṣan within.
   All the gods then guarded me. There was a shout, "The one of bad command has come."

2. They scorch me all about, like cowives, (like ailing) ribs.
   Inattention, nakedness, and exhaustion oppress me. Like a bird, my attention keeps fluttering here and there.
3. Like mice their tails, the cares gnaw at me, your praiser, o you of a hundred resolves.
   At once show mercy to us, bounteous Indra, and become like a father to us.

4. I chose Kuruśravaṇa of Trasadasyu's line as my king,
   most liberal to his cantors—I a seer—
5. (Saying,) "He whose three tawny (horses) convey me on his chariot along the straight way—
   I shall praise him at a (sacrifice) with a priestly gift of a thousand (cows)"—
6. (I chose) the father of Upamaśravas for whom there were sweet songs,
   delightful like a dwelling place for one at home in it.
7. Learn, o Upamaśravas, his son, o grandson of Mitrāthiti:
   I am the celebrant of your father.
8. If I could be the master of immortals or of mortals,
   my bounteous patron would still live.
9. No one lives beyond the commandment of the gods, even one with a hundred selves.
   And thus have I turned away from my yokemate.

X.34 (860) Gambler

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa or Akṣa Maujavant
14 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7

One of the most famous, most translated, and most anthologized hymns in the R̥gveda, this lively and vivid lament of the gambler depicts the sad lot of a man addicted to dicing but unsuccessful at it. This hapless speaker describes the intoxication that grips him when he is playing or even contemplating play and that leaves him helpless to resist (vss. 1, 5–9), as well as the toll this compulsion takes on his personal life and the self-pity this evokes in him (vss. 2–4, 10–11). At the end of the hymn the gambler vows to renounce play (vs. 12), and the god Savitar restores him to his former position (vs. 13). The final verse (14) is the gambler's address to the dice, urging them to leave him alone and find another victim. This portion of the

hymn has the form of a ritual expiation, embodied especially in the last words of 12d, in which the gambler avows the truth of his speech.

Dicing was an important cultural feature of ancient India, especially associated with kings and the ruling class. Already in middle Vedic sacrifice, in the Rājasūya, the ritual of the consecration of the king, there is a ritual dicing match, rigged so that the king-to-be wins. Of course, the whole of the great epic, the Mahābhārata, is determined by the outcome of the dicing match between Yudhiṣṭhira and his cousins: Yudhiṣṭhira gambles away his kingdom, his brothers, his wife, and himself and must fight to regain his kingship. The much-loved story of Nala and Damayantī also involves the gambling away of a kingdom, this time by Nala. And the dharma texts consider gambling, along with hunting and womanizing, to be a characteristic pursuit—and vice—of kings (cf. Mānava Dharma Śāstra VII.47, 50; for condemnation of gambling in general see, e.g., MDŚ IX.220–28).

Ancient Indian dicing was quite different from the game that the word conjures up in the modern mind, and much scholarship has been devoted to figuring out what the play actually consisted of (see, e.g., Lüders 1907; Falk 1986). It seems to have involved a large quantity of a particular kind of nut (*vibhīdaka* /*vibhītaka*) as the dice; these had no markings on them. They were thrown into a hollow on the ground, and the players took turns pulling out a handful. The best "hand" was one divisible by four, and the other hands were ranked according to how many nuts were left over after a division by four, with a single leftover nut being the worst (see vs. 2c). For details, see Falk (1986: 73–133). Although it may be hard for us to imagine the passions enflamed by this kind of long division, our own games of chance probably will not stand up to scrutiny some millennia in the future.

The monologue form found here is almost unprecedented in the Ṛgveda, and the shifting play of emotions—guilty excitement, tender remembrance of his past life and family, scorn for his own weakness and the disgust he arouses in others, bitter anger at the inanimate dice that brought him low, to which he ascribes agency and malign intention and for which he still longs—is psychologically convincing and very moving. Showing our own biases, we might proudly deem it quite "modern."

1. The dangling (nuts) of the lofty (tree) exhilarate me, the ones born in a windy place, constantly whirling in the gaming hollow.
   Like a draught of soma from Mt. Mūjavant, the wakeful vibhīdaka nut has pleased me.
2. She did not oppose me, nor did she get angry; she was gracious to my comrades and to me.
   I, on account of one die too many, have pushed away my avowed wife.
3. Her mother-in-law [=my mother] hates me; my wife pushes me away.
   A man in distress finds no one to pity him.

"I find no more use for a gambler than for an old nag up for sale," (so they say).

4. Others fondle the wife of a man whose possessions the die with eyes on the prize has hungered for.
   Father, mother, brothers say about him, "We do not know him; lead him away bound."
5. When I resolve, "I will not play with them," I am bereft of my comrades, who go off (without me).
   And as soon as, scattered down, the brown (dice) have raised their voice, I just go to their appointed place, like a girl with a lover.
6. The gambler goes to the hall of play asking himself, "will I win?" puffing himself up with "I will win!"
   The dice run counter to his desire, conferring the winning throws on his opponent.
7. They are just "dice"—but hooking, goading, debasing, scorching, seeking to scorch,
   giving (temporarily) like a child, then in turn slapping down the victor, infused with honey, with power over the gambler.
8. The troop of them plays, three times fifty strong. Like god Savitar's, their ordinances hold true.
   Even to the battle fury of the mighty they do not bow; even the king makes his bow to them.
9. Downward they roll; up above they ricochet. Lacking hands, they overpower the man with hands.
   Heavenly coals scattered down in the gaming hollow, though they are cold they burn up the heart.
10. The wife of the gambler, abandoned, is scorched, and the mother of the child wandering who knows where.
    In debt, fearful, seeking money, he approaches by night the house of others.
11. It scorched the gambler to see a woman—the wife and well-ordered home of others.
    Since early in the day he hitched up his brown horses [=dice], the "little bullock" fell [=left off gambling and sought shelter] (only) at the end of the fire [=late at night].
12. [Gambler:] He who has become the general of your great throng, the foremost king of the troop,
    to him I put forth my ten (fingers): "I withhold no money. This truth I speak."
13. [Savitar:] "Don't keep playing with dice; just plow your own plowland. Be content in your possessions, thinking them much.
    There are your cows, o gambler, there your wife." In this way does Savitar here, protector of the stranger, watch out for me.

14. [To all the dice:] Make alliance (with us) now; have pity on us. Do not conjure against us boldly with your terrible (mind/eye).
    Let your battle fury now settle down, your hostility. Let another now be in the toils of the brown ones.

The next four hymns (35–38) form a group, though they are not all attributed to the same author (see Oldenberg 1888: 229 n. 2, 235). The first two, to the All Gods, are attributed to Luśa Dhānāka, while the other two were given fanciful poets' names derived from the contents of the hymn itself: 37 Abhitapas Saurya ("Scorching Heat, son of the Sun") and 38 Indra Muṣkavant ("Indra, possessing testicles").

X.35 (861) All Gods

Luśa Dhānāka
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13–14

This is primarily a morning hymn, calling especially on the gods associated with the early morning sacrifice for aid and protection: the Sun, the Dawn, Agni, Indra, the Aśvins, as well as Heaven and Earth. The ten interior verses (3–12) have a pāda-length refrain dedicated to the kindled ritual fire, and the activities of Dawn occupy much of the hymn (esp. vss. 3–6). The hymn opens out toward its end, with special focus on the Ādityas (vss. 9, 11–12), but the later prominence of the Ādityas has been prepared by mention of "blamelessness" in earlier verses (2–3) and by the "proclamation of truth" in verse 8. This truth, formulated in 8c, is simply that "the Sun, as spy," rises every day, but we know from elsewhere in the Ṛgveda (nearby X.37 belonging to the same poetic group [see discussion there], as well as, e.g., VII.62.2, VII.63.1) that the Sun is the eye of the Ādityas, especially Mitra and Varuṇa, who attests to the innocence or guilt of the men whom he sees as he rises. Thus this brief truth formulation encapsulates our knowledge that our place in the moral order is mediated through the cosmic order of the daily rhythm of sunrise.

1. They have awakened—these fires accompanied by Indra, bringing light at the early brightenings of the dawn.
   Let great Heaven and Earth take cognizance of our work. Today we choose the help of the gods.
2. We choose the help of Heaven and Earth. The Mother Rivers, the Mountains filled with (soma-)reeds,
   the Sun, the Dawn we beseech for blamelessness. Let Soma, being pressed, make good for us today.
3. Heaven and Earth—let the two great mothers protect us, who are blameless, for our welfare.

Let Dawn, dawning, thrust away evil. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.

4. This foremost ruddy one here, *this lovely goddess—let her, the rich lady, dawn richly for our gain.
   In the distance (from us) we would set the fury of the one who is bad to meet. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
5. Those who stretch forth with the rays of the sun, bringing light at the early brightenings of the dawn,
   do you dawn good things widely today for our fame. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
6. Let the dawns without affliction attend upon us; let the fires rear up loftily with their light.
   Let the Aśvins hitch up their thrusting chariot. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
7. The best portion, worthy to be chosen, impel to us today, o Savitar, for you are a conferrer of treasure.
   I call on her, the begetter of wealth, on the Holy Place. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
8. Let this proclamation of truth carry me through, the one that as sons of Manu we have thought up for the gods:
   "Through all the ruddy (dawns) the Sun, as spy, (always) goes up." – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
9. Today at the strewing of the ritual grass, at the yoking of the pressing stones we beg for lack of hatred and for the realization of our thought.
   Standing in the shelter of the Ādityas, you are astir. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
10. Here is our ritual grass for the joint revelry. I reverently invoke the gods lofty in heaven. I will make the seven Hotars sit (on the ritual grass).
    (We beseech) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Bhaga, for our gain. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
11. Ādityas, come here for our wholeness; aid our sacrifice for us to grow strong, you who take pleasure together.
    (We beseech) Bṛhaspati, Pūṣan, the Aśvins, Bhaga. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
12. O gods, Ādityas, extend to us this shelter good to proclaim, of good support, protective of men,
    for our livestock, for our kith and kin to live. – We beseech Agni, when he is kindled, for well-being.
13. Let all the Maruts today all (be there) with aid, let all the kindled fires be (there with aid).
    Let all the gods come here to us with help; let all wealth, (every) prize be for us.

14. One whom you help, o gods, at the winning of prizes, one whom you safeguard, one whom you carry across narrow straits,
 one who knows no fear under your protection—may we be (all) those, to pursue the gods, powerful ones.

X.36 (862) All Gods

Luśa Dhānāka
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13–14

This hymn is a clear companion piece to the preceding one, X.35. Both hymns consist of fourteen verses, all jagatī except the last two in triṣṭubh. Both have a refrain, and the refrain of X.36 (vss. 2–12) is a minor variant of the last pāda of the first verse of X.35. And there is some shared vocabulary. However, X.36 is not tied closely to the morning sacrifice, as X.35 is. The range of gods invoked in X.36 is wider than those in X.35, although there is a distinct Ādityan cast here as well (see vss. 1, 3–4, 12–13). The hymn seems somewhat loosely and inattentively constructed.

1. Dawn and Night, lofty, well-ornamented—Heaven and Earth, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
 Indra I invoke, the Maruts, the Mountains, the Waters, the Ādityas, Heaven and Earth, the Waters, the Sun.
2. Both Heaven and Earth—let those two discerning truthful ones guard us from narrow straits, from harm.
 Let Dissolution, bad to meet, not gain mastery over us. – This help of the gods we choose today.
3. Let Aditi protect us from every narrow strait—the mother of Mitra and of Varuṇa the wealthy.
 Might we attain sun-filled light that keeps the wolf away. – This help of the gods we choose today.
4. Let the pressing stone as it speaks drive away demonic forces: the bad dream, dissolution, every devourer.
 Might we attain the Ādityan shelter and that of the Maruts. – This help of the gods we choose today.
5. Let Indra sit here on the ritual grass; let the refreshing drink swell. Let Bṛhaspati the chanter chant along with the melodies.
 We would compose a thought possessing good signs for our life. – This help of the gods we choose today.
6. O Aśvins, make our sacrifice heaven-touching and of lively ceremony, to seek favor—
 a sacrifice with its reins pointed eastward, bepoured with ghee. – This help of the gods we choose today.

7. I invoke the Marutian flock, (which is) good to invoke, (which is) pure, high, luck itself—for comradeship.
   Might we acquire the thriving of wealth in order to receive good fame. – This help of the gods we choose today.
8. We will bring (forward) the one swollen with the moisture of the waters, providing riches for the living, pursuing the gods, good to invoke, the glory of the ceremony.
   Soma, destined for Indra, with his good reins would we hold fast. – This help of the gods we choose today.
9. May we win this through easy winning with winners—we living and with living sons, blameless.
   The haters of the sacred formulation should take their own transgression off in all directions. – This help of the gods we choose today.
10. You who are worthy of the sacrifice of Manu, listen: what we beseech you for, gods, give that—
    resolve that brings victory, glory accompanied by wealth and heroes. – This help of the gods we choose today.
11. A great thing of the great ones we choose today: the help of the lofty gods without assault,
    so that we may attain the good born of heroes. – This help of the gods we choose today.
12. In the shelter of great Agni while he is being kindled (may we be) blameless to Mitra and Varuṇa for our well-being;
    may we be under the best impulsion of Savitar. – This help of the gods we choose today.
13. All (you) Gods who are under the commandment of Savitar, whose impulsion is real, and of Mitra and Varuṇa—
    establish well-portioned property in heroes and cows, brilliant wealth for us.
14. Savitar from behind, Savitar from in front, Savitar from above, Savitar from below—
    let Savitar impel wholeness to us; let Savitar bestow on us a long lifetime.

X.37 (863) Sūrya

Abhitapas Saurya
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Some of the themes sketched in X.35 are developed in this hymn into a more satisfyingly shaped composition. Though the hymns are not ascribed to the same poet,

the name of the supposed author of X.37, Abhitapas Saurya ("Scorching Heat, son of the Sun"), is an artificial one, derived from the hymn's subject matter.

In X.35 the daily rising of the sun, expressed as a brief truth formulation (X.35.8), was implicitly connected with the poet's desire for "blamelessness" and for the protection of the Ādityas, but these themes were scattered through the hymn, which focused primarily on the early-morning sacrifice and the various gods associated with it. Here the Sun is primary, and his role as the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa, and thus as the observer of mortals' guilt or blamelessness, is announced at the beginning (vs. 1a), and an expanded version of the truth formulation of X.35.8 is found in the second verse.

The benefits the Sun brings to us and the regularity of his return form the subject of the middle part of the hymn. The connection between our moral behavior and the Sun's daily round is asserted again toward the end of the hymn (vs. 9), which concludes (vs. 12) with a general expiation for faults unwittingly committed and a scapegoating of our enemies.

1. Homage to the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa. Do great service to this truth [=hymn] for the god.
   To the one seen from afar, the signal born of the gods, the son of heaven, to the Sun—recite!
2. Let this expression of reality protect me around on all sides, where(ver) Heaven (and Earth) and the days will extend:
   "Every other thing that stirs settles down. But always the waters (are in motion), always the Sun rises."
3. No godless one seeks the upper hand against you early in the day, when you drive your chariot with its flying steeds.
   The one (wheel) rolls eastward along the dusky realm; with the other one, the light, you drive upward, o Sun.
4. The light with which you thrust away the darkness, o Sun, and the radiance with which you rouse up every moving creature,
   with that drive away from us every want of nourishment, every lack of oblation, drive away disease, away the bad dream.
5. For impelled forth, you guard the commandment for all, when not being angry you proceed upward following your own customs.
   When today we will appeal to you, o Sun, the gods should give assent to our intention.
6. This call of ours let Heaven and Earth, this speech of ours let the waters, Indra, and the Maruts hear.
   Let us not be in want of the sight of the Sun. Living happily may we attain old age.
7. Always may we—of good mind, of good eye, rich in offspring, without disease, without blame—
   living a long time look upon you rising every day, o Sun who have Mitra's might.

8. Upon you, o wide-gazing one, bringing great light, luminous, a joy to every eye,
   mounting from the surface of lofty (heaven)—may we, living, look upon (you), o Sun.
9. You at whose signal all creatures both go forth and settle down at night—
   by reason of our blamelessness, o golden-haired Sun, rise up with ever better (fortune) for us day after day.
10. Be luck for us with your eye, luck for us by day, luck with your radiance, luck in the cold, luck in the heat,
    so that there will be luck on the road, luck at home. This brilliant wealth establish (for us), o Sun.
11. To both our breeds, o gods, to the two-footed and the four-footed, extend shelter.
    Eating, drinking, drawing nourishment, satiated: establish for us this luck and lifetime without flaw.
12. Whatever we have done to you, o gods, with our tongue or through absence of mind, whatever grave (offense) angering the gods,
    on the ungenerous one who brings misfortune to us, on him set down this offense, o good ones.

X.38 (864) Indra

Indra Muṣkavant
5 verses: jagatī

The fanciful name of the poet in the Anukramaṇī ("Indra possessing testicles") is extracted from the final pāda of the poem (5d); the hymn clearly belongs with the other compositions of Luśa (X.35–38). It is a martial hymn, calling on Indra to fight on our side in pitched battles, vanquishing our enemies and sharing the booty he acquires. The style is lively and at times slangy, especially in the final verse, with its surprise ending: depicted as all powerful in the rest of the hymn, Indra is revealed to be not entirely free, but in some unspecified thrall to Kutsa (otherwise a client of Indra's in the Ṛgveda), and the poet taunts Indra to break the bonds.

1. At this glorious battle charge, Indra, at the vehement battle cry, help us to win,
   when at the winning of cattle, when the bespangled (warriors) have been emboldened, the missiles fly in all directions at the time to conquer superior men.
2. Uncover for us at our seat wealth in livestock, flooding with cows, worthy of fame, o Indra.
   May we share the fat with you when you win, able one. As we want it, make it so, good one.

3. Whatever godless one, Dāsa or Ārya, will have in view to fight us, o much-praised Indra—
   let those rivals be easy to conquer for you along with us. With you may we vanquish them in the clash.
4. Who is to be invoked by the few and who by the many, who finds wide space in close quarters at the time to conquer superior men,
   him—the winner in the devouring (battle) today, the famous superior man—Indra may we make inclined toward us for help.
5. For I have heard of you, Indra, as tightly wound, unyielding, spurring on (even) the feeble, o bull.
   Release yourself from Kutsa! Come here! Will such a one as you stay tied by the balls?

From X.39 through X.56 the hymns are arranged in groups of three, each trio generally ascribed to the same poet by the Anukramaṇī. See Oldenberg (1888: 236).

The next three hymns, dedicated to the Aśvins, are attributed to a female poet Ghoṣā (X.39–40) and her son (X.41). Ghoṣā herself bears the patronymic Kākṣīvatī "daughter/descendant of Kakṣīvant," the exceptionally artful poet of I.116–126, who is especially devoted to the Aśvins: five of his eleven hymns are dedicated to them (I.116–120). Indeed the phraseology and mythological references of the Ghoṣā hymns share much with Kakṣīvant's Aśvin hymns, and whether we accept the Anukramaṇī's ascription of the hymns to a woman and her son (the latter identified by the metronymic Ghauṣeya), there can be no doubt that these hymns have a remarkably close relationship to the Kakṣīvant hymns in Maṇḍala I. It is worth remembering that Kakṣīvant shows a particular interest in women and marriage in his hymns.

All three of the Ghoṣā hymns begin with a verse invoking the Aśvins' chariot, but they diverge significantly thereafter. The final hymn (X.41) is a brief (three-verse) pendant to the series, straightforwardly describing the Aśvins' early-morning journey to the sacrifice and urging them to come to our offering in preference to other possible ones. The other two are more complex, with significant involvement of an apparent woman's voice, especially in X.40, which focuses on marriage.

X.39 (865) Aśvins

Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 13

This first hymn in the series is in most ways a standard Aśvin hymn, especially in the Kakṣīvant mode. After the first verse devoted to the chariot and a plea to the Aśvins for lavish gifts (vs. 2), the hymn settles into the familiar pattern of many Aśvin hymns, in a list form briefly mentioning good deeds performed and benevolent

treatment meted out by those two gods. The first catalogue is fairly brief, consisting of the two verses 3–4, with a formulaic summary ("I shall proclaim your ancient heroic deeds . . . ") in verse 5. The poet promises to make the Aśvins "new" (5c), just as they famously made Cyavāna young again (4ab). A second longer catalogue of deeds, more formally constructed, occupies verses 7–11.

But these lists are interrupted (in vs. 6) by a surprising, 1st-person intrusion: a woman (the feminine pronoun *iyám* opens the verse and makes the gender of the speaker unmistakable) calls upon the Aśvins and begs them to serve as her parents and aid her in her plight, since she lacks friends and relations. The reason for her distress is not given, but the traditional view that she is asking them to find her a husband seems reasonable, given that an orphaned girl would have no marital prospects and would be quite vulnerable to mistreatment. Her verse closely echoes the first verse of the hymn: she uses the same verb "invoke" and uses a paternal image like that in verse 1d.

This heartrending verse seems to have no sequel in the hymn. Although it is not impossible that the following catalogue verses are also her speech, it seems unlikely because of their strict conformity to Aśvin-hymn diction. While it is certainly true that the next verses mention several females helped by the Aśvins (the wife for Vimada, the aid given to Vadhrimatī and to Puraṃdhi, vs. 7; to Viśpalā in vs. 8), males are just as often recipients of their favor in those verses, and the most striking female figure, the spinster growing old in her parents' house in verse 3, who is identified with the woman in verse 6 and indeed with Ghoṣā by many commentators, is not in a verse that our female speaker could be saying.

The female speaker in this hymn foreshadows and complements the female speaker, explicitly identified as Ghoṣā, in the next hymn (X.40.5–8), and the speaker in this hymn is often said to be that same Ghoṣā. However, in the opinion of one of us (SWJ) this is quite unlikely because our speaker bemoans her lack of kin, while Ghoṣā in X.40.5 is said to be a king's daughter. Instead, the two female speakers seem meant to contrast with each other and to reflect extreme poles of women's status in a marital context. The other of us (JPB) sees the speaker's lament in 39.6 that she has no friends or relatives as a metaphorical and hyperbolic characterization of her unhappy life rather than a literal description of it. In that case the speaker in X.39 could the woman called Ghoṣā in X.40.

Another, enigmatic reference to a woman is found in verse 11, which ends the catalogue. The verse declares that no trouble afflicts a man if the Aśvins put his chariot and his wife (*pátnī*) "in front." What exactly is meant here is unclear, but we suggest that this is yet another fleeting reference to the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife (*pátnī*) into the ritual in late R̥gveda; the chariot and the wife leading the way remind us of the Mudgala/Mudgalānī hymn (X.102), in which Mudgala's wife, Mudgalānī, serves as successful charioteer in a chariot race—a hymn we have also interpreted as a reference to the new ritual institution of the Sacrificer's Wife. (For further discussion, see the introduction to X.102.)

The hymn ends with a return to the Aśvins' chariot drive (vs. 13), with a few more incidental good deeds, and a summary verse announcing our own praise hymn (vs. 14).

1. Your earth-encircling, smooth-rolling chariot, to be invoked at evening and at the dawns by the man who offers oblation—
that (chariot) of yours do we now invoke, (we) as the latest of those who constantly do so—the (chariot) good to invoke like the name of one's father.
2. Stimulate liberal giving; swell our insightful thoughts; rouse profusions—we are eager for that.
Make us a glorious portion, o Aśvins; make it dear to our generous patrons like soma.
3. You become good fortune even for the woman growing old at home, the helpers even of the one lacking speed, even of the one furthest behind.
Even of the blind man, o Nāsatyas, even of the starving, even of the broken—they say just you are their healers.
4. You two fashioned old Cyavāna, like a chariot, into a youth again, (for him) to move about.
You pulled the son of Tugra out from the waters. All these (deeds) of yours are to be proclaimed at the pressings.
5. I shall proclaim your ancient heroic deeds before the people. And you were also healers, embodiments of joy.
Now we shall make you new (for you) to help us, o Nāsatyas, so that this stranger will place his trust (in us?).
6. [A woman:] "It's I who invoked you: hear me, o Aśvins. Like parents for their son, do your best for me.
I am without friends, without kin, without blood relatives, and heedless: rescue me in the face of this shame."
7. You two with your chariot carried down to Vimada the sleek maiden of Purumitra (to be his wife).
You two came to the call of Vadhrimatī. You two made an easy birth for Puraṃdhi.
8. You two made youthful vigor again for the inspired poet Kali, who was approaching old age.
You two dug Vandana out from the antelope snare. You two in an instant made Viśpalā go.
9. You two raised up Rebha, set in hiding and already dead, o bullish Aśvins.
You two made the earth-cleft and the heated (pot) comfortable for Atri, for Saptavadhri.
10. You two gave to Pedu a white horse, a prizewinner with nine and ninety prizes, o Aśvins,
(a horse) to be celebrated, one setting its comrades to running, to be invoked by men like good fortune, and the embodiment of joy.

11. O you two kings and Aditi—not from anywhere does distress or difficulty or fear reach him
 for whom you arrange that his chariot, along with his wife, will be in front, o Aśvins good to invoke, you who follow the course of the Rudras [=Maruts].
12. Drive here with your chariot swifter than thought, which the Ṛbhus made for you, o Aśvins,
 and at whose hitching up the Daughter of Heaven [=Dawn] is born and both bright-lit day halves of Vivasvant.
13. You drove your course with your victorious (chariot) through the mountain. You made the milk-cow swell for Śayu, o Aśvins.
 With your powers you two freed the quail, which had been swallowed, even from within the mouth of the wolf.
14. We have made this praise song for you, o Aśvins. We have fashioned it, like the Bhṛgus a chariot.
 We have clasped it to ourselves like a dashing youth a maiden, holding it close like our own son who continues our lineage.

X.40 (866) Aśvins

Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
14 verses: jagatī

As suggested in the introduction to X.39, we two translators have different interpretations of the ritual context for this pair of hymns. Accordingly we have contributed contrastive, signed discussions of the hymn's context in this introduction.

SWJ

As already noted, the hymn begins with a mention of the Aśvins' chariot journey (vs. 1) and indeed continues with speculations on their whereabouts (vss. 2–3) and a description of our attempts to attract them to our sacrifice (vs. 4). These verses contain vivid imagery, especially the contrastive pictures of sexual pairing in verses 2–3 (see also X.39.14c, which is a mirror image of 40.2d).

These erotic images prepare the way for the scenes of apparent betrothal and marriage that follow (vss. 5–11). These verses open with the speech of a woman identified as Ghoṣā, whose status as king's daughter contrasts with that of the bereft, unnamed woman who speaks in X.39.5 (see the introduction to that hymn). Ghoṣā boldly addresses the Aśvins themselves and demands to know if they will "be there" for her (vs. 5). The scene sketched is, in my opinion, a Svayaṃvara or woman's "self-choice" marriage. The stage has been set for this in verse 3d, where the Aśvins are described as coming to soma-pressings "like kings' sons" (*rājaputrā́*).

This tatpuruṣa compound is found only here in the R̥gveda and would neatly identify the Aśvins as appropriate suitors coming to a Svayaṃvara, where the woman making the choice would likewise be a king's daughter (5b). Her unabashed speech, questioning them about their suitability as husbands and supporters, would be fitting in a Svayaṃvara context.

The next verses (6–8) seem to depart from the marriage theme, and it is not possible to be certain that they are spoken by Ghoṣā. I believe they are, however, because the marital theme continues beneath the surface: verses 5–7 contain four somewhat problematic instances of the preverb *pári* "around" (5a, 6a, 6c, 7c), in the same metrical position, but in awkwardly unidiomatic verbal lexemes. The problems they cause for the translator are seen in the somewhat "off" English that represents them. This intrusive *pári* is, in our opinion, an insistent reminder of the wedding context, evoking one of the important parts of the wedding ceremony, the *circum*ambulation of the fire, and also evoking the consummation of the marriage, the embrace of the bride, found close to the end of these wedding verses, in 10d "the wives are to be embraced (***pariṣ****vajé*)."

Ghoṣā's likely speech ends with verse 8, ostensibly praising the Aśvins for "giving freedom/wide space" to various individuals and opening up an enclosure with all the characteristics of the Vala cave, a deed not usually attributed to the Aśvins. The wide space created and the opening up of the enclosure can (perhaps fancifully) be taken metaphorically here, in this wedding context, for the deflowering of the virgin bride.

The following two verses (9–10) return to the narrator/poet and describe the wedding itself, but develop the theme identified in the previous verse. In the first pāda of verse 9 the maiden is born—presumably born into womanhood, after the "opening up" just performed. The "little lad" in flight in the same pāda may be her bridegroom, or even a pet diminutive for his penis. The next two pādas (9bc), with sprouting plants and flowing rivers, are generally interpreted as expressing nature's approval of the marriage; in contrast we again consider them metaphorical, expressing the advent of sexual maturity and sexual awakening. The sprouting sprouts of pāda b remind us of the maiden Apālā's prayer that her pubic hair would grow along with the plants in the fields (VIII.91.5–6); the rivers of pāda c might either be her first menstrual blood, the blood from her deflowering, or sexual fluids produced by arousal. This verse ends with the same phrase that Ghoṣā used in her question to the Aśvins, "be there for the day," but with a reversal of genders (the bride will be there for her husband, as Ghoṣā asked the Aśvins to be there for her), followed by the triumphant "this is marriage!" While verse 9 treats marriage as an intimate exchange between the two principals, verse 10 brings us back to the social aspects of marriage: the exchange relation created between the families and the effort required to bring it about. The mysteries of sex are, mysteriously, touched on in verse 11.

The hymn ends with three verses (12–14) more conventionally addressed to the Aśvins with requests for goods and aid, though the final verse (14) echoes the questions about the whereabouts of the Aśvins that began the hymn.

JPB

An alternate view of the ritual context of X.39–40 is that both hymns find a place in an Atirātra, an Overnight Soma Sacrifice, in the morning rites that conclude the ceremony. In these rites, which are a continuation of the rites of the Third Pressing from the previous evening, the Aśvins return in the morning of the second day to receive a last offering of soma. The references to the night between evening and morning oblations (e.g., X.40.2), to the soma offerings (X.39.4, 40.13, 14), and, of course, to the Aśvins, to whom both hymns are dedicated, accord with the ritual context of an Atrirātra.

One of the themes of the Third Pressing in the classical soma rites is the fertility of the sacrificing couple. Since this is a relatively late hymn, the Wife of the Sacrificer may already have been a participant in the rite for which these hymns were composed. Therefore, the hymns might have been an appeal to the Aśvins to help make the marriage of the sacrificing couple a success by giving them a son. Thus, the "little lad" who "has taken flight" in the puzzling verse 9 might be the hoped-for child, whose birth marks the success of their marriage. His "flight" can refer to his conception; the image of an embryo "flying" to the womb also occurs in X.162.3. For a detailed study of the hymn that reflects this interpretation, see Brereton 2013.

1. Your chariot that is driving where—who attends to that brilliant one for its good progress, o men—
   the (chariot) driving early in the morning, extending to every clan, traveling at every dawn—(who attends to it) with insightful thought and labor?
2. Where in the evening, where at dawn will the Aśvins make their evening meal? Where did they spend the night?
   Who takes you to bed, like a widow her brother-in-law, or to a rendezvous like a maiden a dashing youth?
3. You awaken early in the morning like a pitiable [?] old couple; at every dawn you, deserving the sacrifice, come to the house.
   For whom do you become occulted, or for whom do you descend to his soma-pressings like kings' sons, o men?
4. Like hunters on the track of wild elephants, we call you down in the evening and at dawn with our oblation.
   You two bring refreshment to the man who pours the libation in proper order, you superior men, you lords of beauty.
5. Circling around you two, o Aśvins, Ghoṣā, the daughter of a king, said, "I ask you, o men:
   Will you be there for me for the day and be there for the night? Will you exert your abilities (for me, as if) for a steed (to win the prize) of horse and chariot?

6. "You two poets circle around your chariot, o Aśvins; you arrive at the clans of the singer, as Kutsa (arrived at the poet/Kavi Uśanā).
   The bee holds the honey of you two encircled with her mouth, o Aśvins, as a young woman (holds) a tryst (within her mouth) [=keeps quiet about it].
7. "You two came to Bhujyu, o Aśvins, you to Vaśa, you to Śiñjāra, to Uśanā.
   The hostile man will circumvent your comradeship, but I find pleasure in your benevolence along with your help.
8. "You two make wide space for Kr̥śa, you for Śayu, o Aśvins, you for the worshiper and the widow.
   You two open up the thundering enclosure with its seven mouths for the sake of gain, o Aśvins."
9. The maiden has been born, and the little lad has taken flight. And when sprouts have sprouted according to (the Aśvins') wondrous powers,
   the rivers flow for him as if into a valley; (she) is there for him for the day (and for the night): this is marriage!
10. They cry over the living; they make a mutual exchange at the rite. The men [=relatives of the couple] have been devising (the marriage) for a long stretch:
    It is a precious thing for the fathers, that they brought (the couple) together; a joy for husbands that their wives are to be embraced.
11. We do not know this—proclaim it to us—how a young man dwells peacefully in the womb of a young woman.
    Might we go to the house of the seed-laden bull who has a ruddy cow as his beloved, o Aśvins. We are eager for this.
12. Your benevolence has come here, you Aśvins whose goods are prize mares. Our desires have held themselves down firmly in our hearts, Aśvins.
    You have become the paired herdsmen, the two lords of beauty. Dear to Aryaman, might we reach his porticos.
13. Reaching exhilaration in the dwelling of Manu, provide wealth along with heroes to the eloquent one.
    Make a ford that offers good drink, o lords of beauty. Smash away the post standing in our path, the malevolence.
14. Where today and among which clans do the wondrous Aśvins, the lords of beauty, find exhilaration?
    Who has held them down? To the house of which inspired poet or sacrificer have they gone?

X.41 (867) Aśvins

Suhastya Ghauṣeya
3 verses: jagatī

As we already noted in the introduction to this group of hymns, this brief appendix is a conventional journey hymn. Nothing in this hymn, save the treatment of the chariot in verse 1, makes its relationship to the two preceding Ghoṣā hymns evident. The poet is identified as a son of Ghoṣā by the metronymic Ghauṣeya; his first name, Suhastya "Good-handed," is extracted from verse 3.

1. This your common three-wheeled chariot—much invoked and worthy of praise, going again and again to the soma-pressings,
   earth-encircling and worthy of the rites—do we invoke with well-twisted (hymns) at the break of dawn.
2. O Nāsatyas, you mount the early-yoked, early-driving, honey-bringing chariot,
   by which you go to the sacrificing clans, o men, and to the sacrifice even of a weak man, with its Hotar, Aśvins.
3. Whether you are going to an Adhvaryu of good hands with honey in his palms, or to an Agnidh of steadfast skill, a domestic leader,
   or to the soma-pressings of an inspired poet, from there drive here to honey-drinking, o Aśvins.

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa is said to be the poet of the next three hymns (42–44), all dedicated to Indra and showing clear verbal connections.

X.42 (868) Indra

Kr̥ṣna Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The usual mutually beneficial relationship between Indra, giver of bounties and aid in battle, and the singer/sacrificer offering poems and oblations in exchange is the theme of this hymn. However, the hymn is scarcely run-of-the-mill, for the poet has captured the relationship in a series of deftly fashioned images, and the balance between giving god and offering mortals is maintained throughout.

1. Like an archer in ambush who shoots farther, like a busy attendant,
   bring forth the praise song for him.
   With your speech, o inspired poets, surpass the speech of the stranger.
   Bring Indra to rest at our soma, o singer.

2. Try to entice your comrade here, (like) a cow with milking. Singer, awaken Indra (like) a lover.
   Bestir the champion to the giving of his bounty, like a full bucket overflowing with goods.
3. Do they not call you the benefactor, bounteous one? Sharpen me: I hear that you are the sharpening.
   Let my insight be profitable, able one. Bring Bhaga, the goods-finder, here to us, Indra.
4. The peoples, taking their stand in conflict together, separately call upon you in the struggle for "what's mine."
   Whoever offers an oblation makes (you) his yokemate here: the champion wants no fellowship with a non-presser.
5. Whoever, providing a pleasing offering, presses for him sharp soma drops, ample like streaming wealth (on the hoof),
   for him (Indra) makes a team of his rivals, easily spurred, easily goaded, in the early morning of the day. He smashes the obstacle [/Vṛtra].
6. Indra, upon whom we have set our laud, the bounteous one who has fixed his desire upon us—
   let his rival, though he is far away, take fright, and let the peoples' brilliant things bow down to him.
7. Thrust the rival far away into the distance with that mighty *śamba*-pole of yours, o you who are much invoked.
   Set (a mass of) barley and cattle on us, Indra. For the singer, make his insight possessed of prizes as its ornaments.
8. Indra, within whom the bullish pressings, the sharp soma drops, have gone, ample to the end—
   the bounteous one will certainly not hold back his giving. He carries down much of value to the presser.
9. And having overplayed his hand, he will win the jackpot, when the (gambler) with the best throw pulls out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the right time.
   Whoever has desire for the gods, he does not withhold the stakes; just him does the autonomous one [=Indra] unite with wealth.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
    With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.
11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
    from in front and from the middle. Let him, as comrade, create wide space for his comrades.

X.43 (869) Indra

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10–11

This second of Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa's three eleven-verse Indra hymns has very clear ties to the previous one, X.42. They share the last two verses (10–11), as well as lexicon and phraseology. Yet the two hymns are thematically distinct, and X.43 lacks the carefully balanced reciprocity of X.42. The focus here is on liquids—on nourishing streams of water (vss. 3, 6–8) as well as on soma (vss. 2, 4, 6–8)—and on finding the sun or the light (vss. 1, 4, 5, 8). These themes together evoke the triumphant progress of the Ārya, conquering rivers and finding sunlit space, which is mythically embodied in Indra's release of the waters confined by Vr̥tra indirectly reflected in verse 8b. This recourse to the mythic model accounts for the references to Manu, the primal Ārya sacrificer (vss. 4, 8).

One can point to a nice index of the different uses even shared elements are put to in the two hymns X.42 and X.43: identical or almost identical phrases assign roles to exactly opposite personnel. Thus, the phrase "fix desire on someone" (√*śri kā́mam* LOCATIVE) is found in both X.42.6b and X.43.2b; in the former Indra has fixed his desire on us, while in the latter I have fixed my desire on Indra. Similarly, in the elaborate gambling simile found almost identically in X.42.9abc and X.43.5ab it is the mortal who is the subject in X.42 and Indra in X.43.

1. My thoughts—sun-finding, all directed to a single goal, eager—have bellowed to Indra.
   They embrace him as wives do their husband, embrace the bounteous one like a sleek young blood, for help.
2. Directed toward you, my mind does not lose the track: just on you have I fixed my desire, o much invoked one.
   Like a king, wondrous one, sit down upon the ritual grass. Since there is soma here, let there be drinking for you.
3. Indra, warding off from diverse directions neglect and hunger—just he, as bounteous one, will be master of wealth and goods.
   Just his vitality do these seven rivers, in their torrent, increase—the vitality of the tempestuous bull.
4. Like birds on a leafy tree, the soma drops—exhilarating, sitting in the cup—have settled down on Indra.
   Their countenance, powerfully flashing forth again and again, found the sun, the light of the Ārya, for Manu.
5. Like a (gambler) with the best throw he pulls out the perfect ("hand" of dice) in the game, when the bounteous one wins the sun as his takings.
   No other will be able to match this heroic deed of yours, neither one of the past, o bounteous one, nor of the present.

6. Clan after clan does the bounteous one encircle, as the bull keeping watch over the nourishing streams of the peoples.
   In whose soma-pressings the able one rejoices, that one vanquishes, with his sharp soma juices, those doing battle.
7. When the soma juices have flowed together into Indra, like waters into a river, like brooks into a pond,
   the inspired poets at the (sacrificial) seat increase his greatness, like rain the barley, with the heavenly gift [/drop].
8. Like an angry bull he flies among the airy realms—he who made these waters here to have an Ārya as their husband.
   The bounteous one found light for the presser possessing lively gifts [/drops], for Manu who offered oblation.
9. Let the axe [=fire] arise, together with its light. The (cow) of truth, yielding good milk, should come into being as of old.
   Let the ruddy, blazing (fire) shine out with its radiance. The master of settlements should blaze like the blazing sun.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
    With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.
11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
    from in front and from the middle. Let him, as partner, create wide space for his partners.

X.44 (870) Indra

Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, jagatī 4–9, triṣṭubh 10–11

This last in the trio of Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa's Indra hymns shares its final two verses (10–11) with the previous two hymns, though it otherwise has little in common with them. The hymn bristles with difficulties in the details, but its overall trajectory is clear: it is a journey hymn, inviting Indra to drive to our sacrifice (vss. 1–3) to take his place on the ritual ground and partake of our soma (vss. 4–5). The poet then contrasts evil-minded non-sacrificers with their generous counterparts (vss. 6–7). The poet gives a brief précis of the heroic deeds Indra accomplished in the past after drinking soma (vs. 8), and in verse 9 urges Indra to defeat the poet's enemies, while making himself at home at the soma sacrifice.

1. Let Indra, our own lord, drive here for exhilaration—he who, forceful, thrusting according to his own principle,
   is projecting his vigor over all powers with his boundless, great bullishness.

2. Your chariot provides a good standing place and your fallow bays are easy to control. Your mace is attached to your fist, o lord of men.
   Along a good path, o king, drive swiftly in this direction. We will strengthen your bullish powers when you have drunk.
3. Let the conveyors of Indra convey him here, the lord of men in whose arm is the mace; mighty and forceful, let them convey him, the mighty,
   the bull who projects his vigor, possessing real unbridled power; let his feasting companions convey him here among us.
4. Just in this way you drench yourself in the lord [=soma], the companion of the cup, the like-minded one, the prop of nourishment upon its support.
   Make it your might; take it entirely within you, so that you will be powerful for the strengthening of those who keep watch (over us) nearby [=patrons?].
5. Good things shall come to us, for I have expressed my prayer. Drive here to the soma-possessor's offering, which is accompanied by good prayers.
   You are master. Take your seat here on this ritual grass. Your cups cannot be ventured against, on (ritual) principle.
6. The first invocations to the gods went forth each separately. They brought themselves fame difficult to surpass.
   The *non-protectors [?], who were not able to board the ship of sacrifice, sank down in stillness.
7. Just exactly in this way let the ones of evil intent, whose horses have been badly yoked, be behind and facing backward;
   correspondingly, those who are nearer and facing forward, they are (ready) to give, when the many (ritual) patterns and nourishments are (in place).
8. He gave foundation to the trembling mountains and plains. Heaven cried out and made the midspaces quake.
   He props apart the two Holy Places [=Heaven and Earth] that were conjoined. Having drunk of the bull, he recites the solemn words in his exhilaration.
9. I bring this well-made crook to you, with which you will break the hoof-breakers, o generous one.
   Let there be a home for you in this soma-pressing. Become a sharer in our pressed soma and in our quest, bounteous one.
10. With cows we would overcome neglect that goes ill, and with barley we would overcome all hunger, o you who are much invoked.
    With our kings and our community might we be the first to win the stakes.

11. Let Indra, lord of the formulation, protect us all around, from behind and from above and from below, from him who wishes ill—
 from in front and from the middle. Let him, as partner, create wide space for his partners.

Although the Anukramaṇī names Vatsaprī as the poet of only the next two hymns (45–46) to Agni, the following (47) to Indra clearly belongs here as well, as Oldenberg argues (1888: 236).

X.45 (871) Agni

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
12 verses: triṣṭubh

The hymn begins with Agni's triple birth, in heaven, on the earthly sacrificial ground, and in the waters (vs. 1), and the next verses touch on Agni's several forms (vss. 2–3). The cosmic aspects of Agni (vss. 4–6, 8) are thus marshaled in service of the ritual Agni, installed as fire-priest in verse 7, and it is therefore easy to believe in the good things that will come to the mortal who sacrifices to Agni (vss. 9–12).

1. From heaven was Agni born first; from us was he born second as Jātavedas.
 (Born) a third time in the waters, the inexhaustible one—kindling him, the manly minded, very attentive (mortal) sings to him.
2. We know your threefold triads, Agni; we know your domains dispersed in many places.
 We know your highest name, which is hidden; we know the wellspring whence you have come here.
3. In the sea, in the waters has the one with a manly mind (kindled) you; the one with manly eye kindled (you) in the udder of heaven, o Agni.
 The buffaloes strengthened you, who were standing in the third realm, in the lap of the waters.
4. Agni has roared like thundering heaven, constantly licking at (heaven and) earth, anointing the plants,
 for as soon as he was born kindled, he surveyed them. He radiates with his radiant beam between the two world-halves.
5. Rouser of beauties, buttress of riches, propeller of inspired thoughts, with Soma as herdsman,
 good one, son of strength, king in the waters, he radiates forth, being kindled at the forefront of the dawns.
6. Beacon of all creation, the embryo filled both world-halves while he was being born.

He split even the solid rock in leaving it, when the five peoples sacrificed to Agni.

7. The fire-priest, pure circlet, very wise—Agni has been installed as immortal among the mortals.
He raises reddish smoke, as he carries it here and there, seeking to reach up to heaven with his blazing flame.
8. Seen as a bright ornament, he has flashed forth widely, alight for beauty through a lifetime hard to forget.
Agni became immortal through his vital powers, when Heaven of good seed begat him.
9. Whoever will make for you today a ghee-covered cake, o god Agni of fortunate flame,
lead him further forward, toward a better state, toward favor apportioned by the gods, o youngest one.
10. Give him a portion in (ritual acts) deserving good fame, Agni; give him a portion in every solemn speech being pronounced.
He will become dear to the Sun, dear to Agni. He will burst out with (offspring already) born, burst out with those to be born.
11. Sacrificing to you, Agni, through the days, they have acquired all desirable goods.
Together with you the fire-priests, seeking wealth, have opened up the pen full of cows.
12. Agni has been praised by the seers—Vaiśvānara, well-disposed to men, having Soma as his herdsman.
We would invoke Heaven and Earth, the two without hatred. O gods, establish wealth rich in heroes for us.

X.46 (872) Agni

Vatsaprī Bhālandana
10 verses: triṣṭubh (and virāj)

Attributed to the same poet as X.45, this hymn is clearly a companion piece to the previous hymn, sharing much of the same specialized lexicon (e.g., *uśíj* "fire-priest") and an interest in the various forms and births of fire and their relation to the ritual fire. However, X.46 is, for the most part, more rhetorically driven and more obscurely phrased than X.45, with images pushed to the edge of intelligibility (and beyond; see, e.g., vs. 7). The trickiness of its phraseology is matched by its meter, a shifting combination of triṣṭubh and virāj lines, with a number analyzable as either. Nonetheless, the emphasis on the installation of the ritual fire is manifest throughout: the original installation (vss. 4, 8–10), the reinstallation of the disappearing Agni (vss. 2–3), and the current installation (vss. 5–6).

1. Forth (he goes) when just born—the Hotar, the great cloud-finder; seated among men, he sat down in the lap of the waters.
   He who has been established establishes vital powers for you; he is the extender of goods to the man who does honor and he is the protector of bodies.
2. This one here—having done honor to him in the seat of the waters, they followed him along his tracks like a vanished cow.
   With reverences seeking him who was hiding in secret, the fire-priests, the insightful Bhr̥gus found him.
3. This one here—Trita Vaibhūvasa, much seeking, found him on the head of an inviolable cow.
   Growing strong with kindness when just born here in the habitations, the youth becomes the navel of the luminous realm.
4. The fire-priests with their reverences made him the gladdening Hotar, the leader of the ceremonies, and made the sacrifice advance,
   made him the pure circlet of the clans, when they established him as the oblation conveyor among the sons of Manu.
5. Forth (they lead him), *glittering, great, conferring poetic inspiration, splitter of strongholds, no fool—(even) fools (do so).
   Leading him, the embryo of the trees, the gold-bearded one, like a steed for whom a verse is the prize, they have set forth an inspired thought.
6. Trita [= the "third" fire], standing fast in the dwelling places, surrounded, sits down inside the womb.
   From there the domestic leader of the clans [=Agni], having amassed (goods?), with his reinless (horses) speeds to the superior men through the spreading expanse.
7. His are the unaging oars of the houses, the pure fires with singing smoke,
   bright, swelling, bustling, sitting on the wood like winds (in trees), like soma-drinks (in the wooden cups).
8. Agni displays his own pulsing excitement with his tongue, (displays) the patterns of the earth with his appearance.
   Him, blazing and pure, have the Āyus established as gladdening Hotar, most worthy of sacrifice.
9. Agni, whom Heaven and Earth begat, whom the Waters, Tvaṣṭar, and the Bhr̥gus begat with their powers,
   the one first to be reverently invoked—Mātariśvan and the gods fashioned him as the means of sacrifice for Manu.
10. You whom the gods established as conveyor of the oblation, whom the sons of Manu, craving much, established as means of sacrifice,
    o Agni, establish vital power for the praiser on your course. One who seeks the gods ad(vances), for glory gets the girls.

X.47 (873) Indra

Saptagu Āṅgirasa
8 verses: triṣṭubh

Though the Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a different poet from the last two, structural considerations make it clear that it belongs with X.45–46, as Oldenberg convincingly argues (1888: 236); the Anukramaṇī has simply extracted the name Saptagu Āṅgirasa from verse 6, where it is properly applied to the god Bṛhaspati. Nonetheless, the subject matter of this hymn is quite distinct from the two Agni hymns that precede it: it is a naked demand to Indra for wealth. The hymn has a superficially monotonous structure consisting of attributes in the accusative: verses 2–5 form a single sentence dependent on the second hemistich of 1. But this monotony conceals, or rather reveals, the poet's cleverness, for it is entirely ambiguous whether the accusatives modify Indra or the "wealth" of the refrain found in all the d-pādas. In the former case, the adjectives would agree with the accusative *tvā* in the verb phrase found in 1c *vidmā́ hí tvā* "for we know you (as)," punctuated and interrupted by the syntactically unconnected refrain; in the latter case with the accusative *rayím* in the refrain. The semantics of the predicate adjectives in these verses would allow either, sometimes slightly tipped toward one or the other. It may seem that the question is settled finally in verse 5, where we encounter the first noun—*vā́jam* "prize"—in this sea of adjectives, since "prize" might seem a more likely synonym of "wealth" than of Indra. However, in the rhetorical universe of the Ṛgveda it would certainly be possible to refer to a god as a prize. We think it highly likely that the poet intended the audience to consider both possibilities throughout the sequence.

The last three verses (6–8) more conventionally state that praises are being offered, to Bṛhaspati (vs. 6) and to Indra (vss. 7–8), in return for favors.

1. We have grasped your right hand, Indra, seeking goods, you goods-lord of goods,
   for we know you as cow-lord of cows, o champion. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
2. Possessing good weapons, good help, good guidance, supporting four seas worth of riches,
   ever to be celebrated, praiseworthy, bringing abundant things of value. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
3. Accompanied by good sacred formulations, accompanied by the gods, lofty, wide, deep, broad-based, o Indra,
   accompanied by famous seers, powerful, vanquishing hostility. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
4. Winning prizes, having poets as heroes, overwhelming, gaining the stakes, swelling with strength, of good skill,
   Dasyu-smashing, stronghold-splitting—(above all) *real*, o Indra. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.

5. Rich in horses, in chariots, in heroes, a thousandfold, hundredfold prize, o Indra,
   having beneficial troops, having poets as heroes, sun-winning. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
6. To the one with seven cows [/Saptagu], whose poetic vision is truth, to Bṛhaspati of good wisdom my thought goes forth,
   to him, the Āṅgirasa, who is to be reverently approached with homage. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
7. My eager messengers, my praises, proceed to Indra, begging for favors,
   touching the heart, intertwining with the mind. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.
8. What I beg you for, give that to us, Indra—a lofty dwelling place without equal among the peoples.
   Let Heaven and Earth applaud this. – To us give bright, bullish wealth.

The next three hymns (X.48–50) are both ascribed to and dedicated to Indra Vaikuṇṭha. Given the supposed identity of poet and dedicand, the first two of these are appropriately cast as Indra's own self-praise.

X.48 (874) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 7, 10–11

As noted immediately above, X.48 and 49 present themselves as Indra's self-praise (*ātmastuti*, on which see Thompson 1997). They are spoken in the 1st person, with insistent 1st-person pronouns and verbs. In this hymn only verse 10 lacks an explicit 1st-person form, and the first verses especially establish the pattern: each pāda of verse 1 begins with a 1st-person pronoun (*ahám, ahám, mā́m, ahám*), as does each half-verse of verse 2 (*ahám, ahám*), and again, each pāda of verse 3 (*máhyam, máyi, máma, mā́m*). (Of the 1st-person singular pronominal paradigm, only instrumental *máyā* and ablative *mát* are absent from this hymn, and both are poorly attested in the Ṛgveda [three and twelve times respectively].)

The contents of the self-praise range over Indra's many accomplishments, but especially focus on his victories in battle and what he has won thereby—a warrior's boast, in other words. Some of the exploits are obscure, indeed mentioned only here (e.g., vs. 8).

The only verse lacking 1st-person reference, verse 10, appears to be a riddle, with a balanced opposition between the good or successful man (?), who has soma within, and his opposite number, whose failure is exposed by his lack of soma. But this interpretation must remain tentative, given the puzzles in that verse.

1. I was the foremost lord of goods. I win the stakes over and over.
   Upon me do the creatures call, like kinfolk their father. I apportion food to the pious man.
2. I am Indra, the bulwark and breast(-plate) of the Atharvan. For Trita I begat the cows from the serpent.
   I took the manliness from the Dasyus, through my abilities seeking to win their cowpens for Dadhyañc and Mātariśvan.
3. For me Tvaṣṭar fashioned the metal mace. To me have the gods bent their will.
   My face, like that of the sun, is difficult to surpass. They recognize me by what has been done and is to be done.
4. I (win) livestock in cows and horses, overflowing and golden, with my weapon.
   Many thousands do I "grind down" for the pious man, when the soma drops accompanied by hymns have brought me to exhilaration.
5. I am Indra: only I have not had the stake won away, and never have I given way to death.
   Just when you are pressing soma, beg me for good things. You will not suffer harm in partnership with me, o Pūrus.
6. I (struck down) by twos those, snorting heavily, who caused Indra and his mace to fight (them);
   I struck down with my stroke those who were challenging (me), while I, unbowable, was talking tough to those to be bowed.
7. One against one here, I am the utter victor—and against two. What can three do?
   I strike against a multitude, like sheaves on a threshing floor. Do my rivals, who have no Indra, scorn me?
8. I restored Atithigva to the Guṅgus like a restorative, and I upheld the obstacle-overcomer among the clans,
   when in the smashing of Parṇaya and in the smashing of Karañja, (as) in the great smashing of Vṛtra, I spread my fame.
9. Namī Sāpya came to the fore for me in order to enjoy restorative refreshment, and in the quest for cows he made partnerships (with me?) once again.
   When I readied the arrow for him in the clashes, just then did I make him one to be praised and hymned.
10. Soma is visible in the one, (even) when it is within (him); the herdsman exposes the other by its absence.
    Whoever tries to fight the sharp-horned bull remains bound within the thick (fetter) of deception.
11. I, the god of gods, do not violate the ordinances of the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudriyas.
    For auspicious power they have fashioned me—invincible, indestructible, unconquerable.

X.49 (875) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
11 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 2, 11

Like the preceding hymn (X.48), this is an *ātmastuti* or self-praise spoken by Indra, with relentless repetition of 1st-person singular pronouns and verbs. For the former, note that of the twenty half-verses (excluding the final summary verse 11), sixteen begin with *ahám* "I" and one with *mā́m* "me." Only three (6c, 7c, and 10c) lack such an initial pronoun, and 7c has the enclitic *mā* "me" in second position (*yán mā*), while 10c begins with *spārhám*, a rhyme form to *ahám*.

As for verbs, the hymn is dominated by the injunctive, with nearly twenty such forms. This morphological skewing contrasts with the patterns in the preceding hymn, which has a wider range and more balanced selection of tenses and moods. The reasons for the prominence of the injunctive are not clear to us and, somewhat surprisingly, Hoffmann fails to treat this hymn systematically in his monograph on that verbal form (Hoffmann 1967).

Like X.48 this hymn particularly celebrates Indra's martial successes and the aid he gave various mortal clients in subduing their enemies. Several of these vignettes are little known, if at all, and others are quite obscurely phrased (e.g., vs. 3, though it treats the well-known saga of Kutsa, Śuṣṇa, and, probably, Uśanā Kāvya; vs. 6). The hymn also emphasizes, more than X.48, the importance of the sacrifice in strengthening Indra and securing his help: verse 1 announces this theme quite clearly, and verses 4–7 treat the relationship between sacrificer and Indra as well, though not as clearly.

The final verse (11) summarizes Indra's own speech, before addressing him directly and assuring him that the deeds he himself boasted of will also be praised by singers.

1. I gave the foremost good to the singer. I made the sacred formulation a strengthener for me.
   I became the inciter of the sacrificer. I have vanquished the non-sacrificers in every contest.
2. Upon me they conferred the name Indra among the gods—the creatures of heaven and earth and of the waters.
   I (took as my own) the two quick fallow bays, the bulls, who follow a separate commandment; boldly I took the mace for power.
3. I pierced the cloak for the poet with my thrusts; I helped Kutsa with this help:
   I, as the piercer of Śuṣṇa, held the deadly weapon—I, who did not give the Ārya name to the Dasyu.
4. I was like a father to the Vetasus for them to prevail; I made Tugra and Smadibha subject to Kutsa.
   I came to be under the direction of the sacrificer: when I brought myself to the fore for Tuji, his dear things were not to be assailed.

5. I made Mṛgaya subject to Śrutarvan, when he yielded to me when the ritual patterns were in due order.
   I made the vassal submissive for Āyu, and I made Paḍgṛbhi subject to Savya.
6. I am the one who (aided?) Navavāstva of the lofty chariots—I, the smasher of Vṛtra [/obstacles], shattered the Dāsa like obstacles [/Vṛtras]—
   when he [=Navavāstva] was causing (me) to grow strong and spread out according to due ritual order. I made the realms of light on the distant far shore of airy space.
7. I drive around with the swift (horses) of the Sun, being conveyed forth in my might by the Etaśas.
   When the soma-pressing of Manu says to me (that it [=soma] is) for my raiment, I will sideline (even) the effective Dāsa with my thrusts.
8. I am the smasher of the seven, a greater Nahus than Nahus. I made Turvaśa and Yadu to be famed through my power.
   I put down the one, his might with my might; I strengthened the nine and ninety (others) (to become) proud.
9. I, the bull, held fast the seven streams that were flowing and racing upon the earth.
   I of good resolve traverse the floods. Through fighting I found the way for Manu to seek.
10. I held fast in them that which the god Tvaṣṭar never held fast in them: the gleaming,
    eagerly sought (milk) in the udders, in the bellies of the cows, the honey of honey, the swelling soma, and its milk-mixture.
11. Thus in this way Indra sought to attract the gods and men to him; with his stirring (action) he be(stirred them)—the bounteous one whose generosity is real.
    All these (deeds) of yours do the powerful ones sing, you able master of the fallow bays, whose glory is your own.

X.50 (876) Indra Vaikuṇṭha

Indra Vaikuṇṭha
7 verses: jagatī 1–2, abhisāriṇī 3–4, triṣṭubh 5, jagatī 6–7

A much more conventional Indra hymn than the preceding two of this series (X.48–49). Here Indra is praised in the context and at the occasion of a soma sacrifice, and the usual reciprocal obligations of sacrificer and god are set forth.

1. Chant forth to the great one who finds exhilaration from the soma-stalk, who is common to all men and is present to all,
   to Indra, whose good-battling strength, great fame, and manliness the two world-halves respect.

2. And now he is praised by his comrade as manly and forceful: Indra is worthy of celebration for a man like me.
   Amid all the chariot-poles and at the getting of prizes, o master of settlements, or at an obstacle [/Vṛtra] or among the waters, you find exhilaration, o champion.
3. Who are those men, Indra, who are for your refreshment, who will strive to attain your favor as their traveling companion?
   Who spur themselves on for your lordly prize; who (spur themselves on) when waters, their own fields, or masculine power is at stake?
4. You will become great through our sacred formulation, Indra.
   You will become the worthy recipient of the sacrifice at all the soma-pressings.
   You will become the stirring of men in every contest and the supreme mantra, o you who are common to all domains.
5. Right now, as the superior one, help those eager for the sacrifice. The peoples know your great succor and protection.
   Right now, (so that) you will be unaging and you will make (us) strong, we have made all these soma-pressings powerful, to draw (you) here.
6. We have made all these soma-pressings powerful, to draw (you) here—which you have (now) taken into your own self, o son of strength.
   To your liking and for your support, are, in succession, the cup, the sacrifice, the mantra, and the upraised sacred formulation and speech.
7. Those who craft sacred formulations for you when the soma is pressed, for you to give of goods and of good, o inspired one,
   through the thought of your favor they will go forward along the path, at your exhilaration on the pressed soma-stalk.

The next three hymns (X.51–53), attributed to Agni Saucīka, treat the well-known story of the flight and disappearance of Agni, who wished to avoid the ritual role of conveying the oblations and the fate of his brothers. The gods find him hidden in the waters and entice him back by promising him a share in the sacrifice.

X.51 (877) Dialogue between Agni and the Gods

Agni Saucīka
9 verses: triṣṭubh

The classic dialogue between Agni and the gods (or one or more gods: he addresses Mitra and Varuṇa [vs. 2] and Varuṇa alone [vss. 4, 6]). Agni appears still to be in the waters (or just emerged), and the gods have only recently discovered his hiding place. The first question is which god spotted him (vss. 1–3). Agni then

describes the fear that drove him from his sacrificial role, in responsive language that defines an omphalos (vss. 4, 6, esp. 4a and 6c). In the omphalos verse (5) the gods make the argument that Manu, a human and the first sacrificer, deserves to have his sacrifice completed by Agni's conveyance of the oblations. It is striking that the gods, perhaps disingenuously, do not argue for their own deserving state. In the last three verses (7–9) the gods propose rewards for Agni's returning to his task, and he accepts them.

1. [Gods:] Great was that caul and sturdy it was, enveloped in which you entered the waters.
   All your bodies in their multiple forms, o Agni Jātavedas, did a single god see.
2. [Agni:] Who saw me? Which one was that god who fully saw my bodies in their multiple forms?
   Where indeed, o Mitra and Varuṇa, are all the kindling sticks of Agni lying, which lead to the gods?
3. [Gods:] We sought you in multiple places, o Jātavedas, you who had entered into the waters, into the plants, o Agni.
   Yama espied you, o bright-beamed one, shining out farther than (a distance) of ten stages.
4. [Agni:] I went in fear of the Hotarship, Varuṇa, lest the gods yoke me to it.
   My bodies settled down in multiple places. I, Agni, do not attend to this business.
5. [Gods:] Come here! Manu, devoted to the gods, has desire for sacrifice, having properly prepared it. Yet you dwell in darkness, Agni.
   Make the paths leading to the gods easily passable. Convey the oblations, showing your benevolence.
6. [Agni:] The brothers of Agni earlier kept rolling along after this business, like a charioteer along the road.
   In fear of this, Varuṇa, I went far away. I flinched from it like a buffalo from the bowstring of an archer.
7. [Gods:] We will make a lifetime for you, which is free from old age, Agni, so that yoked (to your task) you will not suffer harm, Jātavedas.
   Then will you, showing your benevolence, convey their portion of the oblation to the gods, o well-born one?
8. [Agni:] Give the fore-offerings and the after-offerings exclusively to me, the nourishing portion of the oblation,
   and the "ghee" of the waters and the "man" of the plants, and let there be a long lifetime for Agni, o gods.
9. [Gods:] Yours be the fore-offerings and the after-offerings exclusively, the nourishing portions of the oblation;
   yours, Agni, be this whole sacrifice. To you let the four quarters bow.

X.52 (878) Address to the Gods from Agni

Agni Saucīka
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn logically follows the preceding one. Agni has agreed to accept the Hotarship, which he had originally fled. He ceremonially requests guidance from the gods about how to perform his new duties in verses 1–2.

The middle verse (3) seems not to be spoken by Agni, but rather by a mortal attending or officiating at the sacrifice and catching sight of the newly installed Agni. In the first half of the verse he expresses some anxiety about this fire's connection to Yama; at issue is the possible confusion between, or identity of, the new ritual fire with the cremation fire, which conveys the dead to Yama's realm. (Similar anxiety is treated in the funeral hymns, especially X.16.) Reassurance seems to be dispensed in the second half of the verse; it may be (following Lanman 1884: 388) that the daily rebirth is that of the Agnihotra fire, while the monthly rebirth is for the Śrāddha, or ceremony in honor of the dead—allowing separation of the two fires and their functions.

In verses 4–5 Agni quotes the gods' words as they install him (4cd), and promises to fulfill his duties in exemplary fashion. The final verse (6) sums up the gods' installation of Agni.

1. [Agni:] All you gods, instruct me how, chosen here as Hotar, I shall conceive it [=task] upon being installed.
   Proclaim to me how, by what path I shall convey your share, your oblation to you.
2. [Agni:] I have sat down as the better sacrificing Hotar. All the gods, the Maruts spur me on.
   Every day, o Aśvins, the Adhvaryu-ship is yours. The kindling stick becomes the Formulator; this is the poured offering for you two.
3. [Sacificer?:] This one here who is the Hotar—who is he to Yama? Whom am I calling upon when the gods anoint (him)?
   Every day he is born, every month. And so the gods have installed him as conveyor of the oblation.
4. [Agni:] The gods have installed me as conveyor of the oblation—I who had slipped away, undergoing many troubles:
   "Agni, the knowing one, will arrange the sacrifice for us, with its five courses, three turns, seven threads."
5. [Agni:] Through sacrifice I will win you immortality rich in heroes, so that I can make wide space for you, o gods.
   Might I place the mace in Indra's arms. Then he will win all these battles.
6. [Poet:] Three hundred, three thousand, and thirty-nine gods revered Agni.
   They sprinkled him with ghee; they strewed the ritual grass for him. Just after that they installed him as Hotar.

X.53 (879) Agni ["Opferlied"]

Agni Saucīka
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 6–7, 9–11

This hymn begins from the situation depicted in the last two hymns, but turns into a mystical meditation on the sacrifice. The first three verses are apparently spoken by mortal sacrificers, who have installed the recovered Agni as Hotar and are pleased (vs. 3) with the resulting success of their sacrifice.

In verses 4–5 Agni responds, inviting both gods and men to take pleasure in his application to this ritual role. Verse 4 also contains one of the few R̥gvedic references to the enmity between the gods (Devas) and the Asuras. Although this persistent rivalry dominates middle Vedic mythology, it only begins, very tentatively, to appear in the late R̥gveda, to which period this hymn belongs.

The next three verses (6–8) are again the speech of human priests, addressed both to Agni and to fellow celebrants, urging them to carry on the ritual work. In verse 7 the sacrifice, as often, is metaphorically identified with a chariot, and the puzzling beginning of verse 8 may refer metaphorically to a river crossing, taking the sacrificers to a better state.

The most enigmatic verses of the hymn are the last three (9–11), in jagatī meter (as opposed to the prevalent, but not ubiquitous triṣṭubh). They begin with the god Tvaṣṭar, the "Fashioner" of the gods: he has fashioned drinking cups for the gods, and now sharpens a hatchet for Brahmaṇaspati to use. Since Brahmaṇaspati has a transparent name, "Lord of the Sacred Formulation," he is almost surely going to use the hatchet to hew a sacred formulation, the mystical verbal embodiment of cosmic truth. In verse 10 the poets are urged to use the same types of tools, presumably to fashion the same things: sacred formulations. Or, in another common metaphor, to create "hidden tracks" (that is, mystical verbal compositions). Verse 11 may be an example of such a hidden track: it is certainly impenetrable enough, with riddling and paradoxical images that several millennia of study have not solved.

1. The one whom we sought with our mind, this one has come here just
   now, knowing the sacrifice, attentive to its articulation.
   He will perform sacrifice for us in the divine assemblage as superior
   sacrificer, for he will sit down (as Hotar) close by, in front of us.
2. He has been realized as Hotar, as superior sacrificer by his installation.
   Since he watches over the well-placed pleasurable offerings,
   we shall sacrifice to the gods deserving the sacrifice—yes! We will
   reverently salute those worthy of salutation with ghee.
3. He has made our pursuit of the gods successful today. We found the
   tongue of the sacrifice in hiding.
   He has come here, sweet smelling, clothing himself in life. He has made
   our invocation of the gods fortunate today.

4. [Agni:] Might I today devise this as the foremost of speech, by which we gods will overcome the Asuras.
   You nourishment eaters and you worthy of the sacrifice, you five peoples, take pleasure in my Hotarship.
5. [Agni:] Let the five peoples take pleasure in my Hotarship—and the cow-born and those who are worthy of the sacrifice.
   Let Earth protect us from earthly constraint; let the Midspace protect us from heavenly (constraint).
6. Stretching the thread (of the sacrifice), (o Agni,) go following the radiance of the airy realm. Protect the paths of light made by insightful thought.
   (You priests,) weave a work without knots for the ever-praising ones. Become Manu, (o Agni). Generate the divine race.
7. Bind the axle-straps, you comrades in soma [=priests], and set the reins in order, and ornament (the chariot).
   Drive the eight-seated chariot all about, the one with which the gods led a dear thing to (us?).
8. The stony (stream) is flowing. Pull yourselves together! Stand up! Advance, comrades!
   There let us leave behind those who were unfriendly. Might we cross over and upward to friendly ones, to prizes.
9. Tvaṣṭar knew (his own) magic powers, as the best worker of workers, bearing the cups, the most beneficial drinking vessels of the gods.
   Now he sharpens the hatchet of good metal, with which the "(chariot-) steed," Brahmaṇaspati, will hew.
10. Now, poets, sharpen up (the hatchets) that are (here), the axes with which you carve for the immortal.
   As knowing ones, create hidden tracks, (like the track) by which the gods achieved immortality.
11. They have placed the "maiden" in the embryo [=Agni?], have placed the "calf" in his mouth, with cryptic mind and tongue.
   He, always benevolent, eager to gain, with the yoking strings wins the victory just at the decisive moment.

The next three hymns (54–56) are attributed to Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya.

X.54 (880) Indra

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This short hymn begins by announcing (somewhat cryptically) that Indra's fame or reputation is what prompted a frantic call on him from Heaven and Earth (vs. 1cd),

and it ends (6cd) with the poet's summation of his own praise hymn. In between there is both standard praise of Indra's well-known deeds (e.g., vss. 1cd, 3) and more ambiguously phrased assessment of his accomplishments. In verse 2bc, for example, Indra's victories seem almost dismissively characterized as a magic trick (*māyā́*, the word later famously used of the "illusion" of reality) produced by his own boasts. The four names of Indra in verse 4 are presumably his famous epithets, such as *vr̥trahán* "Vr̥tra-smasher," but the poet also seems to be slyly implying that Indra's deeds are reducible to words. These deprecatory hints are slight and could be otherwise interpreted, but in any case the poet has avoided a conventional recital of Indra's exploits. Instead he seems to be saying that Indra's great deeds and the words that express them are essentially the same: his reputation is equivalent to himself (vs. 1ab); his own proclamation of his powers is taken by the world as identical to "battles" (vs. 2); his epithets are the power that produces his deeds (vs. 4). Although this poetic ploy is, in one sense, the usual message that mortals' praises strengthen Indra for his deeds, the poet here seems to be claiming something more: that the poet's formulations are Indra's essence.

In the very last pāda of the hymn the poet seems to be doing something similar with his own name Br̥haduktha ("having/producing lofty speech"), as Jesse Lundquist has suggested to me (personal communication). The pāda (6d) reads *brahmakŕ̥to br̥hádukthād avāci* ("...has been spoken...from Br̥haduktha, the crafter of sacred formulations"), with his name positioned between the other two words in the line. The first half of his name, *br̥hát*, is a close phonological match to the first half of the first word, *brahma* "sacred formulation"; the last half of his name, *uktha* "(solemn) speech," is etymologically related to the verb *avāci*. Thus his very name can be, as it were, transformed into the verbal products that are his reason for being.

1. It was to your reputation in its greatness, o bounteous one, that the two frightened world-halves called upon you.
   You furthered the gods, you overcame the Dāsa might, as you did your best for the other progeny, Indra.
2. When you roamed, having grown strong in body, proclaiming your own powers among the peoples, o Indra,
   that was just your magic trick, which they call battles: neither today nor before have you discovered a rival.
3. What seers before us have reached the end of your whole greatness,
   in that you begot your mother and father [=Heaven and Earth] at the same time from your own body?
4. There exist four lordly names for you, the unfalsifiable names of the buffalo.
   You surely know all these, through which you have done your deeds, o bounteous one.
5. You have made those good things yours alone, both those in the open and those that are hidden.
   Do not pass over my desire, bounteous one: you are the one who takes heed and gives, Indra,

6. Who placed light within the light, who joined the honeys with the honey.
   So, a dear fortifying thought has been spoken to Indra from
      Bṛhaduktha, the crafter of sacred formulations.

X.55 (881) Indra [or the All Gods?]

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A puzzling and enigmatic hymn, with close ties to the previous hymn, especially at the beginning. The first puzzle is that this, the second of the three Bṛhaduktha hymns (X.54–56), is assigned Indra as its deity in the Anukramaṇī, but is longer (eight verses) than the previous hymn (X.54, six verses), which is also dedicated to Indra. Bergaigne (per Oldenberg 1888: 226) suggests that the ascription is incorrect, and that this is really an All God hymn, as is the next one (X.56, seven verses). Although Oldenberg rejected this suggestion (1888: 238–39) on grounds of content, we are inclined to accept it. Although Indra is the clear or likely deity of most of the verses (1–3, 7–8), the center part of the hymn (vss. 4–6) is not, in our view, Indraic. Moreover, the numerology (see esp. vss. 2–3, 5) and the riddling phraseology throughout, without expressed referents, are quite reminiscent of a certain type of speculative All God hymn.

The first verse of the hymn exactly matches that of X.54 in structure (with X.55.1 somewhat clearer syntactically), and their second pādas are almost identical. Both concern the call that Heaven and Earth issued to Indra in fright, and go on, in the second hemistich, to recount other of Indra's deeds. And this verse also takes up the theme of the "hidden name" found also in X.54.4. But already in X.55.1 we meet an unidentified referent: "the sons of your (or a?) brother," especially puzzling because, as far as we know, Indra has no brother.

The name theme continues in verse 2, but introduces a light, into which five unidentified dear ones merge. Nothing further is made of this merger, but the same lexeme "merge into" (*sáṃ* √*viś*) is used in the next hymn (X.55.1) for the merger of the body of the dead with light in some unspecified distant place, and it seems likely that our passage touches on the same theme of death and transfiguration. Though verse 3 begins with a conventional deed of Indra, filling the world-halves, it pursues both the numerology of verse 2 and the light, now both fragmented and unified. Although various identifications of the referents here have been proposed, none is entirely convincing; moreover, the poet seems more interested in keeping us guessing than in providing a clear roadmap.

What does seem clear is that the cosmic context of Heaven and Earth and the focus on light(s) have led us to astronomical imagery, which occupies the next three verses of the hymn. We begin (vs. 4) with Dawn, explicitly identified, and celebrated in a formulaic final pāda that is modeled on the refrain of a famous mystical All God hymn,

III.55, where the "one and only lordship" is that of the gods. The next verse (5) has no identified referents at all, and the language is difficult and cryptic. Nonetheless it seems to refer to the moon traveling among the stars, until swallowed up by a gray one—perhaps the gray twilight of dawn or the smoke of the ritual fire kindled at dawn. The poet seems to recognize the hyper-"poetic" quality of this description (5c) and provides a simply phrased (though not simply interpreted) gloss in pāda d. Verse 6 is most easily interpretable as referring to the sun, who is called a "ruddy eagle" elsewhere in the R̥gveda, but it could also be Agni or Indra; if the latter, it provides a transition to the final two verses (7–8), which belong more clearly to Indra.

1. Far away in the distance is that hidden name which the two, frightened, called you, to grant them vigor.
   You propped up Earth and Heaven at the critical moment, when you were sparking the sons of your brother, bounteous one.
2. Great is that hidden, much-coveted name by which you begat what has been and by which (you will beget) what is to be.
   The light born of old that is his—that dear light do the five dear ones merge into.
3. He filled the two world-halves and their middle. The five (groups of) gods in their proper sequence, seven by seven,
   does he survey with the thirty-four (lights) in their multiplicity, (which are one) light having a single form but following various commandments.
4. In that, o Dawn, you dawned as the foremost of the radiant ones, because you begat the thriving of the thriving,
   in that you have nearer kinship with the more distant (Dawn)—great is the one and only lordship of great (Dawn).
5. The solitary (moon?) running in the crowd of many (stars?)—though he was young, the gray one swallowed him—
   behold the poetic skill of the god in his greatness. (In simple language:) today he died; yesterday he was (still) utterly breathing.
6. Through his power he is the powerful, ruddy eagle, who, as the nestless champion from of old, (has power) over the great.
   What he perceives, that is truly real, not false. He is both the winner and the giver of the eagerly sought good.
7. He acquired his bullish manly powers through these, through whom the mace-bearer grew strong for the Vr̥tra-smashing,
   the gods who, because of the greatness of the deed being done, came into being without (their own) doing.
8. Giving rise to his deeds with (them as his?) yokemate, he who possesses all might and all mind, the smiter of taunts, the overcomer of the powerful,
   having drunk of the soma, having grown strong, the champion blew the Dasyus forth from heaven in battle.

X.56 (881) All Gods

Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
7 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, 7; jagatī 4–6

Traditionally this hymn was interpreted as Bṛhaduktha's funeral hymn for his son Vājin (the name extracted from *vājín-* "prizewinner" in vss. 2–3). More recently it has been taken as the funeral hymn for a horse, either the horse sacrificed in the Aśvamedha (Oldenberg) or simply a particularly distinguished racehorse (Geldner). We find all these interpretations unduly restrictive. Though it is undoubtedly a funeral hymn, or, to be more general, undoubtedly refers to what happens after death, there are no particularly equine features in it, since *vājín* can be used of humans and gods as well as horses. Nor is there any trace of the personal grief a poet might express for his son. Instead the hymn has taken some of the cosmic speculation of the last hymn (esp. X.55.2) and directed it to the more focused topic of the afterlife.

The first two verses urge the dead to merge his body with a light in an unspecified but very distant place, presumably even beyond heavenly lights like the sun, but associated with the gods. This merger is considered a kind of birth (see vs. 1d). The distance traveled on this good journey is treated in verse 3.

The meter changes in the next three verses (4–6) and so, to some extent, does the topic. Verse 4 is quite unclear and quite disputed, in part because the referent of the pronoun "their" (*eṣām*) is not specified. In our opinion the verse asserts that the ancestors ("forefathers") do not control the fate of the recently dead: "their" greatness (i.e., that of the recently dead) is not in the power of their predecessors, the ancestors (4a); rather, the gods transfer the mental spirit of the dead to the realm of the gods (4b), where they, the dead, incorporate animating motion (4c) and re-enter their bodies (4d). In other words, the verse is an attempt to describe the mechanism whereby the dead regain their bodies, joining mental power with physical activity within the envelope of the old body. As such, it is more detailed than the simple, reassuring command to the dead in the funeral hymn X.14.8 "Unite with your body in your full luster," which gives no directions as to how to go about it.

The happy result of this heavenly reincarnation is expressed in the first half of verse 5, but in the second half a more certain, because more visible, means to life after death is depicted—the familiar one of extending one's own life in the lives of one's progeny. This Ṛgvedic truism is, in our view, developed in the following very difficult verse (6) in two complementary ways. On the one hand, sons can make their "lord" (in our view, their father) into a "finder of the sun"—here we take "sun" to be equivalent to the light in verse 1, with which the dead are to merge—in two ways. The father can merge with the highest light by being provided with a proper funeral, and he can have further life on earth, continue to see the sun, as it were, by being propagated in his children and grandchildren. Viewed from the opposite direction, the forefathers, already in the heavenly afterlife, established their paternal dominion by placing descendants in later generations.

The final verse, returning to triṣṭubh meter, simply sums up in simpler language Bṛhaduktha's understanding of this process. For a more detailed interpretation of this hymn as a funeral hymn, see Brereton (forthcoming a).

1. Here is one (light) of yours, and far away is another one. Merge with the third light.
   At the merging of your body, be one cherished and dear to the gods at this highest means of begetting.
2. Let your body, o prizewinner, leading the body, establish a thing of value for us and protection for you.
   Unswerving, in order to uphold the great gods, you should exchange your own light as if for the light in heaven.
3. You are the prizewinner with a winning spirit. You are well gone to the (dawns?), the good trackers, well gone to the praise, well gone to heaven,
   well gone according to the foremost foundations that hold true, well gone to the gods, well gone along your flight.
4. Even the forefathers are not masters of their greatness. The gods placed their mental force among the gods,
   and they enveloped those things that were in vibrant motion. They entered into their bodies again.
5. With their powers they strode around the whole airy realm, measuring the ancient, unmeasurable domains.
   All living beings are held down within their bodies, but they have extended themselves multiply through their offspring.
6. Sons set up their lord [=father] as a finder of the sun in two ways by a third action.
   And their forefathers have established their own offspring as their paternal power, as their "stretched thread" among the later generations.
7. As if with a boat across the swell through all the earth's directions, (having gone) beyond the difficult places with blessings,
   Bṛhaduktha by his greatness has placed his own offspring both among later ones and among those previous.

After the sequence of hymn trios beginning with X.39, the next group (57–60), of four hymns, seems out of place, but Oldenberg (1888: 236) suggests that the whole has been arbitrarily divided into four hymns and could conceivably be resolved into three. The hymns share a theme—that of healing and returning to life—and are ascribed to "the four Gaupāyanas." Perhaps the division into four hymns was suggested by the four supposed authors.

X.57 (883) All Gods

Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu, and Viprabandhu, the four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas
6 verses: gāyatrī

On its surface this hymn contains a simple revivifying spell seeking the return of "mind" to a person or persons in some distress—prefaced by two verses seeking to avoid ritual wrongdoing and to attain the help of Agni. This hymn is closely linked with X.58, a patterned litany calling for the return of mind. In both, "mind" has a broader semantic range than it generally does in English, encompassing not merely thought and mental processes, but what we might want to term "spirit."

Traditionally this hymn and the following three (X.57–60) are considered the poetic representations of an itihāsa (traditional explanatory story) concerning the king Asamāti, who dismissed his purohitas (house-priests), the four Gaupāyanas (supposedly the poets of these very hymns), and hired several Asuras instead. The latter deprived one of the Gaupāyanas, Subandhu, of his life, and in this hymn the three remaining brothers call his mind to return. The anachronistic details in this story—the king's house-priest, the evil nature of Asuras—mark it as a secondary confection, invented for or adapted to hymns composed for other purposes.

1. Let us not depart from the path, nor from the sacrifice of the one who
 has soma, Indra.
 Let hostilities not stand between us.
2. He who assures the success of the sacrifice, who is the thread stretched to
 the gods,
 him [=Agni], bepoured, might we attain.
3. We now call mind hither, with soma dedicated to Naraśaṃsa
 and with the composed thoughts of our forefathers.
4. Let your mind come here again, for will, for skill, for life,
 and to see the sun for a long time.
5. O fathers, let the divine race give us mind again.
 May we keep company with the troop of the living.
6. Under your commandment, o Soma, bearing mind in our bodies,
 may we, along with our offspring, keep company with it.

X.58 (884) The Return of Mind (Manaāvartaṇam)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
12 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn is a continuation of X.57, the spell to bring the return of "mind" to a dead or dying person. But the monotonous patterned repetition in this piece

contrasts with the varied ways in which X.57 seeks the return of mind. In fact, we might consider this the performative verbal material, the incantation itself, referred to in X.57.3 "we now call mind hither."

The structure is simple: each verse envisions a distant location where mind may have gone, and calls for it to return from that place. The first verse is perhaps the most crucial, for Yama is the ruler of the dead, and if mind has gone there, the person in question has presumably died. Yama's realm is also probably alluded to in the middle verse (6): the first verse of the Yama hymn, the first funeral hymn (X.14.1), refers to Yama as the one "who has departed along the great slopes," using the same word, *pravát*, as here. The other destinations are generally features of heaven or of earth; the range seems like an elaborated version of the disposition of the body and its parts in the funeral verse X.16.3 "Let your eye go to the sun, your life-breath to the wind. Go to heaven and to earth as is fitting. Or go to the waters, if it has been fixed for you there. Take your stand in the plants with your limbs," and it is also reminiscent of similar dispositions of the body in the Upaniṣads.

1. If your mind has gone to Yama Vaivasvata far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
2. If your mind has gone to heaven, if to earth far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
3. If your mind has gone to the four-cornered land far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
4. If your mind has gone to the four quarters far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
5. If your mind has gone to the flooding sea far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
6. If your mind has gone to the light-beams, the sloping paths (to Yama) far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
7. If your mind has gone to the waters, if to the plants far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
8. If your mind has gone to the sun, if to the dawn far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
9. If your mind has gone to the lofty mountains far away,
   we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
10. If your mind has gone to this whole moving world far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
11. If your mind has gone to the distant distances far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.
12. If your mind has gone to what has been and what will be far away,
    we will make it turn hither to you, here to live and dwell.

X.59 (885) Nirr̥ti (1–3), Nirr̥ti and Soma (4), Asunīti (5–6), Assorted Divinities (7), Heaven and Earth (8–10), or Indra (10a)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
10 verses: triṣṭubh, except paṅkti 8, mahāpaṅkti 9, paṅktyuttarā 10

Although the themes in this hymn conform to the healing and restorative tone of the other Gaupāyana hymns, neither the structure of the hymn nor the particular application of the verses is entirely clear. Geldner treats it as a unified composition, with verses 1–3 and 8–10 wishing long life and health to Subandhu, and the middle verses 4–7 extending these wishes to other beings.

But structural considerations call this view into question. For one thing, Subandhu is mentioned only in the last part of the hymn (vs. 8), not the first. Moreover, the first four verses are marked by an apotropaic refrain addressed to Nirr̥ti "Dissolution" and should be considered as a group. The first of these verses does concern the restoration or lengthening of the lifetime of an unnamed person, compared to the Aśvins' mythical restoration to youth of Cyavāna; the last of the verses (4) is a conventional prayer to avoid death and attain old age. The two middle verses (2–3) lie further from the theme of restored life, treating success in sacrifice (2) and in combat (3).

The next two verses (5–6) are addressed to Asunīti "the leader to (the other) life," a word found also in the funeral hymns (X.12.4, 15.14, 16.2), calling for the restoration not only of mind (vs. 5a), the concern of X.57–58, but also of other senses and powers. The following verse (7), in the same meter, invokes other gods to join in this restoration.

The final three verses (8–10) are in different, but related meters (variants of paṅkti, assemblages of eight-syllable lines), and share a three-pāda refrain. The first two (8–9) call on Heaven and Earth to provide remedies and remove maladies; the last (10), outside of its refrain, is completely opaque: Indra is asked to "restore the . . . ox that drew the wedding-cart of Uśīnarāṇī," a female figure appearing nowhere else in the R̥gveda, or indeed in Sanskrit (though the masculine *uśīnara* is found as the name of a people in middle Vedic and later) and whose relevance here cannot be fathomed—efforts to do so only demonstrating the ingenuity, but not necessarily the good sense, of the scholars who proposed them.

1. His lifetime has been extended further anew, as the two mounters of the chariot [=Aśvins] (extended) the lifetime (of Cyavāna) with their resolute (power/speech).
   And then (like) Cyavāna he applies his force to his task. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.
2. When the sāman (is sung), for wealth we shall equip ourselves with food affording treasures (of honey) and with measures of fame in quantity.
   Let the singer rejoice in all these of ours. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.

3. May we surmount (the manly powers) of the stranger with our manly powers, as Heaven does Earth, as the mountains the plains.
   The singer perceives all these of ours. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.
4. Do not hand us over to death, Soma. May we now look upon the sun as it rises.
   Throughout the days let our old age be secured for us. – Let Dissolution move herself farther away.

5. You leader to (the other) life, keep our mind firm in us. Lengthen our lifetime, for living.
   Find pleasure in our seeing the sun; strengthen your own body with ghee.
6. You leader to the (other) life, again put sight in us, again breath in us here, for our use.
   For a long time may we look upon the sun as it rises. O Concord, be gracious to us with well-being.
7. Again let Earth give us life-force, again let goddess Heaven, again Midspace.
   Again let Soma give us our body, again let Pūṣan give us the path that is well-being.

8. (Let) the two world-halves (be) luck for the one of good lineage [/Subandhu], the two youthfully exuberant mothers of truth.
   – Let the two bear away whatever malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).
9. Down come the pair, down the trio—down the remedies from heaven. To ground is the single (remedy) coming.
   – Let the two bear away what(ever) malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).
10. Indra, restore the cart-drawing ox that drew the (wedding-)cart of Uśīnarāṇī hither.
   – Let the two bear away what(ever) malady there is. O Heaven and Earth, to ground (let) malady (go). Let nothing whatsoever plague (him).

X.60 (886) Asamāti (1–4, 6), Indra (5), Spell to Heal Subandhu (7–11), Praise of the Hand (12)

The four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas (as for X.57)
12 verses: anuṣṭubh 1–5, anuṣṭubh 6–7, paṅkti 8–9, anuṣṭubh 10–12

Another hymn that invites decomposition. The first six verses are a sort of praśasti or royal encomium of Asamāti; indeed, the first four form a single sentence. There

is no obvious connection to the themes of healing and restoration to life found in the other Gaupāyana hymns, and one can see how the lack of thematic integration invited the explanatory itihāsa (see introduction to X.57) that provides a tale relating King Asamāti to the suffering Subandhu.

The second part of the hymn (vss. 7–12) is a spell to heal Subandhu and restore his mind. It first recalls him to life (vs. 7), then provides models from the constructed and natural worlds (vss. 8 and 9 respectively) for securing Subandhu's mind within him. The return of his mind is announced in verse 10, while his sickness is banished in verse 11, again with models from the natural world. Finally the healing hand is praised in verse 12. Thus, this final segment of the Gaupāyana collection returns us to the first two hymns, X.57–58, and their concentration on the return of the mind of a sick person. Note especially that the first verse of X.58, which envisions the departure of his mind to Yama Vaivasvata in the realm of the dead, is triumphantly completed here by verse 10, "I have brought the mind of Subandhu here from Yama Vaivasvata."

1. To the man of the Māhīnas, with glittering appearance, approached with praise,
   we have come, bearing homage—
2. To Asamāti [/the incomparable], the lavishly overflowing, glittering, downward coursing chariot,
   master of settlements of Bhajeratha,
3. Who dominated the peoples like buffaloes, both those with metal weapons
   and those without, in battle,
4. Under whose commandment Ikṣvāku, the wealthy possessor of grain-stores, is radiant
   like (the sun) in heaven, (as are) the five peoples.
5. O Indra, uphold the lordly powers in the Asamātis, the Rathaproṣṭhas,
   to be seen like the sun in heaven.
6. For the descendants of Agastya you yoke a ruddy paired team.
   You have trodden down the niggards, trodden on all the ungenerous ones, o king.

7. Here is the mother, here the father; here a means of life will come.
   Here is a way to slither forth for you. Subandhu, come here, come out!
8. Just as they tie a yoke with a strap to make it fast,
   even so does he hold fast your mind, for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.
9. Just as this great earth holds fast these trees here,
   even so does he hold fast your mind, for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.
10. I brought the mind of Subandhu here from Yama Vaivasvata,
    for living, not for death, but for invulnerability.

11. Downward does the wind blow; downward the sun gives heat.
    The cow gives milk that goes downward; downward let your malady go.
12. Here is my hand that brings good fortune; here is my (other hand)
        bringing better fortune.
    Here is my all-healing one; here the one of propitious touch.

The next twenty-four hymns, X.61–84, are paired hymns, generally attributed to the same poet and showing signs of internal connection.

The first pair (61–62) are the Nābhānediṣṭha hymns to the All Gods, the first devilishly complex, the second far less so.

X.61 (887) All Gods

Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
27 verses: triṣṭubh

The near impenetrability of this hymn with all its poetic tricks and semantic evasions produces a certain despair in the translator, and it is no wonder that even sensible and thoughtful interpreters have clearly gone astray—as, no doubt, have the present ones. Much of what follows is tentative and provisional, but we have attempted to give an interpretation that is internally consistent and depends as little as possible on outside and post-R̥gvedic materials.

This hymn and the next one are attributed by the Anukramaṇī to Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava. Although the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa contains a story about Nābhānediṣṭha (AiB V.14), it is generally agreed that this later tale has little to do with this hymn and cannot explain its mysteries. We would go further and suggest that the supposed poet's name has simply been extracted from verse 18, where it is, in our view, the name or epithet of a different participant. We are inclined to ascribe the hymn rather to Kakṣīvant, the crafty poet of I.116–126, or a descendant or would-be epigone of his: Kakṣīvant is mentioned in verse 16, and the hymn has certain connections with Kakṣīvant's oeuvre, especially I.121.

The hymn consists of several different sections, but we believe that these are all linked through the dawn sacrifice and the participants therein, particularly Dawn herself, Agni, the Aśvins, and Indra. Two mythological sections treat different myths about Dawn, and these are sandwiched between sections apparently depicting and meditating upon an early-morning sacrifice and the dakṣiṇās, or priestly gifts, distributed there.

The first four verses concern a man called Tūrvayāṇa, who in a verbal contest produces a supremely effective verbal formulation, which brings the Aśvins to the sacrifice and which also prompts liberal gifts to himself and which rescues or otherwise provides help to his parents and priests. His effective speech is contrasted with that of Cyavāna (a client of the Aśvins in other circumstances), who produces

only "sweet dregs" (vs. 2), while Tūrvayāṇa's speech is likened to gushing semen. His invocation to the Aśvins is given verbatim in verse 4.

The next four verses treat the shocking story of Heaven's incest with his daughter, Dawn. This is a favorite myth of the middle Vedic period (see Jamison 1991: 294–96), but nowhere is it as graphically, if fragmentarily, treated as it is here. She finally escapes (vs. 8), but before this happens, some of his semen is spilled on the ground (vs. 7), indeed on the ritual ground (vs. 6). From this semen the ritual fire is fashioned (vss. 7 and 9). Thus, though the rape of Heaven's daughter is depicted as brutal, it results in the creation of the central ritual substance—as so often, around the world, in myths of cosmic rape and incest the taboo sexual encounter is primally creative. It seems likely that the comparison of Tūrvayāṇa's verbal production with semen, in conjunction with the overall theme of dawn sacrifice, prompted the telling of this story in just this place.

Verse 9 and the birth of fire form the transition to the next mythological section, the freeing of Dawn from the Vala cave by the Aṅgirases and Navagvas (vss. 9–13). Verses 9–11 all begin "right away" (*makṣū́*). As noted, verse 9 treats the newly created fire. In verse 10 (at least in our reading of it) the Navagvas attempt to free Dawn from her "protector," the Vala cave. In verse 11 the mythic motifs of the Dawn cow and her milk and of Agni, the product of Heaven's semen, are brought together—the motifs that are sacrificially found together in the dawn sacrifice. The Aṅgiras story is continued in the two following verses (12–13), though the dramatic high point has already been reached.

The subject changes abruptly with the next verses (14–15), back to the ritual fire and the sacrifice to which the Aśvins will come. There then follows a section that has led many commentators (see especially Oldenberg and Geldner) to construct elaborate family trees and "back-stories" for the poet, who is supposed to be seeking either a new, adoptive father (Geldner) or a new varṇa (Oldenberg). In our view these ingenious constructions are unnecessary and misguided. Instead the poet, perhaps Kakṣīvant (16c), is presenting his *patron* with what appears at first to be a praśasti, an encomium, but which then gently mocks him for his pretentions and for perceived stinginess. Verse 16 is a fine straightforward piece of praise, attributing grand titles and qualities to the king, in our view the poet's patron. Verse 17 is more equivocal. The king, the sacrificer, is "of two lineages": this is the term that provoked the family-tree constructions of Oldenberg and Geldner. We think rather that the poet is suggesting that the king is kin to both the human and divine races—or that the king so believes (see the next verse). But the poet also says that the king ought to milk the cow that yields sap but does not give birth—which may be an allusion to the king's slowness to produce dakṣiṇās for his poet, who points out in the second half of the verse that he himself is doing his job in producing poetry. Verse 18 seems to us to embody the pretensions of the patron-king. His name or epithet is Nābhānediṣṭha, "nearest to the navel": "navel" is a standard metaphor for origin and close kinship (especially the point of origin of two disparate groups), as well as for the focal point of the

sacrifice or indeed the world itself. (This epithet must be very old, as the same word is found in Younger Avestan *nabānazdišta* "closely related, next of kin.") And in the second half of the verse he wonders aloud how high his "navel" is, relative to an unidentified other, then boasts of the unbroken chain of generations that links him to the original navel. He gets his comeuppance in the next verse (19), where the god Agni lays claim to the real navel, the gods, the two births, and the cow and her products.

With the patron put in his place, the hymn now turns to a depiction of the dawn sacrifice, or rather its conclusion, in five verses (20–24), each beginning with the word *ádha* "(and) now." The dakṣiṇās are now properly given (see 21ab), and the poet therefore calls on the gods for honor and protection for the patrons (vss. 22–23). In the final verse of this sequence (24) the poet and his colleagues appear to be poised to express their final prayers (24b), prayers found in the final verse (27). In between are two verses (25–26) that ascribe "good lineage" to an unidentified subject, who both takes pleasure in a praise hymn and performs ritual service. The "good lineage" reminds us of the patron's claims to distinguished kinship earlier in the hymn, which were trumped by the god Agni. In these two verses we believe that the poet deliberately left the subject unidentified and that he meant the verses to be read with both Agni and himself (the poet) as potential subjects, thus associating himself with the fine family and divine relations that the patron craved.

Needless to say, this is a very speculative reading of the poem, and many details remain unaccounted for. It is to be hoped that further progress can be made in its interpretation, within a R̥gvedic context.

1. Here is a Rudrian formulation right to the point, (which) he whose
   speech is welcome (produced) with his mental force at a contest
   in skill,
   (a formulation) that, standing ready for liberality, will effectively guide
   across his two parents and, on the fifth [?] day, the seven Hotars.
2. Just he, as the winner (at the contest), (stands ready) for the man who
   can be outwitted to give: Cyavāna measured out his altar with "sweet"
   (dregs),
   but Tūrvayāṇa, whose speech is the most welcome, poured enduring
   semen like a gush—
3. (Tūrvayāṇa)—to whose invocations you two [=Aśvins] run and win
   inspired words, (produced) by his skill, that are like sharp thinking,
   he who, powerfully manly, with arrows in his hand, brought his aim to
   fulfillment.
4. "When black (Night) is sitting among the ruddy cows (of Dawn), o
   Aśvins, I call upon you two, the sons of heaven.
   Pursue my sacrifice, come here to my food, like winners to refreshment,
   as the two of whom no deception can be remembered."

5. He whose (penis,) which performs the virile work, stretched out, discharging (the semen)—(that one,) the manly one, then pulled away (his penis, which had been) "attending on" (her).
   Again he tears out from the maiden, his daughter, what had been "brought to bear" on her—he the unassailable.
6. When what was to be done was at its middle, at the encounter when the father was making love to the young girl—
   as they were going apart, the two left behind a little semen sprinkled down on the back and in the womb of the well-performed (sacrifice).
7. When the father "sprang on" his own daughter, he, uniting (with her), poured down his semen upon the earth.
   The gods, very concerned, begat the sacred formulation, and they fashioned out (of it?) the Lord of the Dwelling Place, protector of commandments.
8. Like a bull in a contest he threw off foam. Heedless, she went away, hither and yon.
   Twisting away, she hastened like the Gift-Cow on foot. [The father:] "Now those caresses of mine have not grasped (her)."

9. Right away, like a chariot-horse (came) the trampling of the offspring [=Agni], and he took his seat at the udder, as one naked in the cold takes a seat close to the fire.
   He gained the kindling wood and he gained the prize; he was born as the upholder, ever doing battle with his strength.
10. Right away the Navagvas came to the fellowship of the maiden [=Dawn] and, speaking the truth, to the yoking of truth.
    Those who approached the protector [=Vala?] of doubly exalted (Dawn?), though they lacked the Gift-Cow, strove to milk the immovable ones [=Vala rocks?].
11. Right away they hastened anew to the fellowship of the maiden and to the semen, which was like a bounty, which is just truth—
    your blazing legacy, which they gained through sacrifice, and the milk of the ruddy female who gives sap as milk.
12. When afterward they became aware of their separation from the livestock, he [=Bṛhaspati or Indra] speaks thus, while bestowing (gifts) at the speaking:
    "Through the goodness of the good one, the bards are blameless. He exerts control over all movable property, all the way up to cattle."
13. They came just then as its besiegers; sitting (a session) for many (days), they strove to split (the fortress?) of Nṛṣada.
    The unassailable one disclosed what was knotted together, what was hidden, of Śuṣṇa, who was propagated in many ways.

14. "Luster" is the name (of him), to whom the gods belong, who have set him down in his triple seat like the sun,

and "Agni Jātavedas" is his name. Hear us, o Hotar, as our Hotar of truth, free of deception.

15. And these two sons of Rudra, the Nāsatyas who possess the chant, are to be greeted and offered sacrifice by me, o Indra—
 the two who give (gifts) to him who, like Manus, provides the twisted ritual grass; the delightful pair for whom pleasing offerings are set out; and the two that seek sacrifice among the clans.

16. This king praised here has been extolled as a ritual adept, and as inspired poet he crosses the waters, creating his own bridge.
 He sets Kakṣīvant atremble and also Agni, as the swift-running wheel of a steed does its wheel-rim.
17. He of two lineages, the son of Vitaraṇa, the sacrificer, is to milk the milk-cow, which is sap-yielding but not giving birth,
 when I enmesh Mitra and Varuṇa with hymns and Aryaman with preeminent defenses.
18. The patron whose lineage this is, setting your insight in heaven, Nābhānediṣṭha [/nearest to the navel], murmurs as he quests:
 "Is this navel of ours highest or is his? I was the so-many-eth after that one."
19. [Agni:] "This, here, is my navel, and here is my seat. These gods here are mine, and here am I—the whole—
 having two births, first born of truth. This (earth?) here did the cow give as her milk as she was being born."

20. Now among these (clans) the gladdening, far-radiant spoked wheel [=Agni] unhitches, the one having a double track, victorious within the wood.
 When the child of the house is like an upright line, right away the mother gives birth to the sturdy one, who grows strong with kindness.
21. And now the cows of the maiden [=Dawn] have gone forth, following the distribution (of goods) of someone swollen (with wealth).
 Listen to us, o you possessing good movable property; you, perform sacrifice! I have grown strong through the liberal gifts of Āśvaghna [/son of the horse-killer].
22. And now you, Indra—know us for the sake of great wealth, o lord of men with the mace in your arms,
 and guard those generous to us and protect our blameless patrons in your charge, o possessor of fallow bays.
23. And now, o you two kings [=Mitra and Varuṇa, or the Aśvins], when in the quest for cattle the hastening one, awakening, makes haste for the bard,
 the dearest inspired poet [=Agni?], because he has become theirs [=patrons'], will carry them away and will bring them across.

24. And now at the thriving of him [=Agni] who is well born—we, rasping at will, now beg this: [see vs. 27]—
    you, his son, are a hastening horse and an inspired poet—as also at the winning of fame.
25. If for the sake of companionship with you two [=Mitra and Varuṇa, or the Aśvins], for us who are his troop, he [=Agni/poet], receiving [/providing] reverence, finds pleasure in his praise hymn—
    he in whom songs in all places come together, like a route with many parts—and he does ritual service for the sake of liberality,
26. He, being sung by the waters and with the gods on his side, is thus "of good lineage." With reverence and hymns,
    with solemn words and speeches, he strengthens (the gods?), for now (he has) arrived. The (ceremonial) course departs from the "milk" of the ruddy one [=Dawn].
27. (. . . we now beg this:) "O gods worthy of the sacrifice, become joined together for great help for us,
    you who, (now) departing, led prizes (here), and who are observers who are never fooled."

X.62 (888) All Gods

Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
11 verses: jagatī 1–4, anuṣṭubh 5, bṛhatī 6, satobṛhatī 7, anuṣṭubh 8–9, gāyatrī 10, triṣṭubh 11

Attributed to the same poet as X.61, this hymn takes up some of the same themes as the previous hymn, but in much more straightforward fashion. The Aṅgirases, who figured in verses 10–13 of X.61, are the subject of the first seven verses of this hymn, with blessings heaped upon them in verses 1–4. Their lineal descent from Agni is clearly indicated here (vss. 5–6), while in X.61 it was present primarily by implication (vss. 9–10). The Vala myth is treated in verses 2 and 7, and in verse 3 the Aṅgirases are credited with cosmogonic deeds more appropriate to Indra.

The "navel" of X.61.18–19 is also encountered in verse 4 of this hymn (loc. *nā́bhā*, pāda a). Although some (e.g., Geldner) consider the navel in that verse to be a truncation of the (supposed) poet's name Nābhānediṣṭha, we consider it to a reference to the sacrificial ground or the ritual fire, as in X.61.19.

The first four verses end with the refrain "Accept the descendant of Manu (*mānavá*)." Geldner, who believes that the hymn conforms to the story told in Aitareya Brāhmaṇa V.14 about Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava, considers this refrain to be a self-reference by the poet and supplies "me" with *mānavám* as its appositive ("accept me, the descendant of Manu"). But we follow Oldenberg in considering

the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa story secondary and, like many Brāhmaṇa explanations of R̥gvedic hymns, based on misunderstanding. Given that our poet's patron is named Manu (see vss. 8 and 11), it seems more likely that in this refrain the poet is commending his patron and/or his family to the protection of the Aṅgirases.

The final four verses (8–11) are a dānastuti of this patron, Manu Sāvarṇi, with the final Aṅgiras verse (7) serving as a transition to this praise of magnanimity.

1. You who, anointed with the sacrifice and the priestly gift, achieved the fellowship of Indra and immortality,
   for you, o Aṅgirases, let there be good fortune. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
2. The fathers who drove up the goods consisting of cows and with truth split the Vala cave at the turning of the year,
   let there be long life for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
3. Who with truth caused the sun to mount in heaven and spread out Mother Earth,
   let there be good offspring for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
4. This one here at the navel (of the sacrifice) speaks to you agreeably in the house. O you seers whose sons are gods, listen to this.
   Let there be good sacred formulation for you, o Aṅgirases. – Accept the descendant of Manu, o you of good wisdom.
5. Just these seers are the Virūpas [/of various forms]; just they possess profound inspiration.
   They are the sons of the Aṅgiras; they were born from Agni.
6. The Virūpas [/those of various forms] who were born from Agni and from heaven,
   Navagva, Daśagva, the best of the Aṅgirases: in company with the gods, (each) is generous.
7. With Indra as their yokemate, the cantors set loose the pen filled with cows and horses.
   Giving me a thousand (cows) with cut-branded ears, they made fame for themselves among the gods.
8. Now let this Manu be propagated and let him grow like a sprout—
   he who is magnanimous in giving all at once a thousand (cows) along with a hundred horses.
9. No one succeeds in taking hold of him any more than the back of heaven.
   The priestly gift of Sāvarṇya spreads out like a river.
10. And also two barbarian-slaves to perform service, each with his allotted (gear), along with an abundance of cows,
    have Yadu and Turva (each) magnanimously bestowed.

11. Let Manu, giver of thousands, leader of the horde, not suffer harm. Let his priestly gift come, aligning itself with the sun.
    Let the gods extend the lifetime of Sāvarṇi, under whose auspices we, unwearied, won the prize of victory.

The next two hymns to the All Gods (63–64) are attributed to Gaya Plāta.

X.63 (889) All Gods

Gaya Plāta
17 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 16–17

The signature word of this hymn is *svastí* "well-being": in the dative *s*^{u}*vastáye* it provides the last four syllables of verses 3–14, and its nominative opens five consecutive pādas in the verses after that refrain (15–16a). The gods from whom the poet solicits well-being are primarily the Ādityas and their mother Aditi, who especially dominate the first half of the hymn. Beginning with verse 9 other gods are also invoked, though the Ādityas keep their prominence. Not surprisingly in a hymn devoted to well-being, the emphasis is on positive thoughts, though some worries about potential dangers do intrude (see vss. 11–12). More surprisingly in a hymn with such a strong Ādityan cast, our potential moral flaws are barely mentioned (vs. 8c).

1. Those from afar who seek to establish friendship, who, gratified by Manu, (seek to establish) the races of Vivasvant,
   the gods who sit on the ritual grass of Yayāti Nahuṣya—let them speak on our behalf.
2. For all your names, o gods, are worthy of homage, worthy of praise, and they are worthy of the sacrifice.
   You who were born from Aditi or from the waters, who from the earth, listen to my call here.
3. Those for whom their mother swells the honeyed milk, (for whom) Aditi, (like) unbounded heaven, massive as a stone, (swells) the beestings,
   those whose gusts are hymns, bullishly bearing, rich in property—applaud those Ādityas—for well-being.
4. Having their eyes on men, unblinking, as their due the gods have achieved lofty immortality.
   Having light as their chariot, snake-sly, blameless, they wear the height of heaven as their garment—for well-being.
5. The very strong sovereign kings who have come to the sacrifice, who, undeviating, have established their own dwelling in heaven—
   seek to entice them here with reverence, with well-turned (hymns)—the great Ādityas and Aditi—for well-being.

6. Who brings to success for you the praise that you will enjoy, all you gods of Manu, however many you are?
   Who will properly prepare for you, powerfully born ones, the ceremony that will carry us across difficult straits—for well-being?
7. You for whom Manu, with his fire kindled by mind, along with the seven Hotars, first attracted Hotrā (Libation) with sacrifice,
   you Ādityas, hold out fearlessness as shelter. Make easy passages, easy pathways for us—for well-being.
8. The forethoughtful counselors who are masters of the world, of everything stationary and moving—
   o gods, rescue us today from transgression done or not done—for well-being.
9. In the raids we call on Indra easy to call, on the divine race of good action that releases from difficult straits,
   on Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, for winning, on Heaven and Earth, the Maruts—for well-being.
10. Upon Earth of good protection and faultless Heaven, upon Aditi of good shelter, of good guidance,
    (as) upon a divine boat with good oars, without defect, not leaking, may we mount—for well-being.
11. All you worthy of the sacrifice, speak for us, for help; rescue us from the crooked ill-going way.
    With an invocation to the gods that comes true we would invoke you as you listen, o gods, for aid—for well-being.
12. Away with disease, away with all lack of oblation, away with the ill-met hostility of the malicious.
    Gods, keep hatred at a distance from us. Extend broad shelter to us—for well-being.
13. Every mortal thrives unharmed and is propagated with progeny forth from his foundation,
    whom, o Ādityas, you lead with your good leading across all difficult passages—for well-being.
14. Which one, o gods, you help at the contest for prizes, which one, o Maruts, you help at the contest of champions when the stake is set,
    that early-traveling, winning chariot, which suffers no harm, might we mount, o Indra—for well-being.
15. Well-being for us on the pathways and in the wastelands, well-being in the waters, in the precinct of the sun,
    well-being for us in the wombs at the making of sons—well-being confer (on us) for wealth, o Maruts.
16. For it is just well-being that is best on the path forward—that, (already) rich in inheritance, sets out toward something valuable.
    Let it keep guard over us at home and in a foreign place; with the gods as its herdsmen let it be easy of access.

17. In just this way has the son of Plati of inspired thought strengthened you, all you Ādityas and Aditi.
    The over-mastering superior men, the divine race, has been praised by Amartya Gaya.

X.64 (890) All Gods

Gaya Plāta
17 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12, 16–17

Making up for his restrained focus on the Ādityas in the preceding All God hymn (X.63), the poet Gaya Plāta here produces an expansive litany of almost every god and goddess he can think of, major or minor. He begins with rhetorical questions (vs. 1): which god would it be best to address? Having suggested that all of them are potentially his targets (vs. 2), he runs through a long list of possible individuals (vss. 3–12), sometimes listing the bare name, sometimes offering further characterization.

Only in verses 13–14 do we reach something more interesting. In verse 13 he expresses his hope that the Maruts will recognize their "common birth" with him, presumably on the basis of their shared role as singers and poets (on this see also I.87.5), as they meet at the "navel" (the loaded word of X.61–62, hymns attributed to a different poet). The navel here must be both the sacrificial ground of the here-and-now and the mythical point of their joint origin, before their division into mortals and gods. In verse 14 he suggests Heaven and Earth as a model for this kinship. Perhaps the idea is that Heaven and Earth are not divided, with Heaven taking the gods' side and Earth that of mortals, but they work as partners—both being related to the gods and both accepting the sacrifice of men. In any case the kinship that the poet has suggested he has with the Maruts as poets he asserts in another way in verse 16, where he describes himself as a "powerfully roaring poet" (*kavís tuvīrávān*), the exact phrase with which he identified Bṛhaspati, the wordsmith par excellence of the gods, in verse 4.

The final two verses (16–17), in a different meter from the rest of the poem, are the poet's summary verses, both beginning with *evā́* "in this way" and both mentioning the poet by name. The second of the two is also found at the end of X.63.

1. How shall we contemplate—of which one of the gods shall we contemplate the name that is good to contemplate, as they listen to my plea?
   Who will be merciful; which one will create joy for us? Which one will turn hither with help?
2. Our intentions are intent (on them), the insights in our hearts. Our trackers follow their track and fly to (all) directions.
   No dispenser of mercy other than them is found. My desires have fastened upon the gods.

3. (Shall it be) Narāśaṃsa, Pūṣan, Agohya (the Unconcealable), or Agni kindled by the gods that I address with a hymn,
   or the Sun and Moon, (the new and) bright [=full] Moon, Yama in heaven, Trita, Wind, Dawn, Night, the Aśvins?
4. How will the powerfully roaring poet Bṛhaspati grow strong, through what hymn with its well-twisted (ornaments)?
   Let Aja Ekapād with the chanters who are easy to call, let Ahi Budhnya harken to my call.
5. Or, o Aditi, at the birth of the skillful one [=Agni] under your commandment, will you seek to entice here the two kings Mitra and Varuṇa?
   (Or will it be) Aryaman, whose path is not to be transgressed, who possesses many chariots, who possesses seven Hotars, at his births in diverse forms?
6. Let the steeds who heed the call heed our call—all the prizewinners of measured pace,
   who by themselves win thousands as if at the winning of wisdom, the ones who have greatly borne away for themselves the spoils in the encounters.
7. Set in front with your praises Vāyu, who hitches up the chariot, Plenitude, and Pūṣan, for comradeship,
   for at the impulsion of god Savitar they follow his will—those of one mind (follow the will) of him who is of one mind (with them).
8. The thrice seven flowing rivers, the great waters, the trees, the mountains, and Agni do we call upon for help—
   and upon the archers in their seat—Kṛśānu, Tiṣya (the Dog Star), and Rudra the Rudrian among the Rudras.
9. Sarasvatī, Sarayu, Sindhu with their waves—let the great strengthening ones come here greatly with their help—
   the divine waters, the sweetening mothers. Sing their ghee-rich, honey-rich milk for us.
10. And let the mother Bṛhaddivā hear our speech, and Tvaṣṭar with the divine ones, (namely) the Wives (of the Gods), and the Father,
    Ṛbhukṣan, Vāja, Lord of the Chariot, Bhaga. Let the delightful laud of the one who labors protect us—
11. Delightful to the sight like a peaceful dwelling abounding in food. Auspicious is the praise invocation of the Rudras, the Maruts.
    May we be glorious among the peoples with our cows. May we always be accompanied by refreshment, o gods.
12. The insight that you gave me—you gods, Maruts, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra—
    make it swell like a milk-cow with milk. Surely you will convey the hymns on your chariot?

13. Surely in some way you will take notice of this common birth of ours, Maruts?
    At the navel where we first come together, there let Aditi establish our relationship.
14. For Heaven and Earth, the two great mothers, the goddesses worthy of the sacrifice, proceed by virtue of their kinship with the gods.
    Both support both (breeds [=gods and men]) with their supports, and with the Fathers they sprinkle much seed.
15. Hotrā (Libation) reaches through to everything of value—as do Bṛhaspati and Aramati [/Devotion], the very admirable.
    Where the honey-pressing pressing-stone is given lofty voice, the inspired thinkers have bellowed with their thoughts.
16. In just this way the powerfully roaring poet, knowing the truth, seeking goods, desiring goods,
    the inspired Gaya here with hymns and compositions has swelled the divine races.
17. In just this way has the son of Plati of inspired thought strengthened you, all you Ādityas and Aditi.
    The overmastering superior men, the divine race, has been praised by Amartya Gaya.

Hymns X.65–66 are attributed to a Vasukarṇa Vāsukra, who is otherwise unknown in the Ṛgveda. But his patronymic links him to Vasukra Aindra, poet of the fiendishly challenging and immensely clever X.27–29, as well as another poet with the same patronymic, namely Vasukṛt Vāsukra, one possible author of X.20–26, another set of well-crafted hymns. Moreover, the final verse of X.65 (15) and the final two of X.66 (14–15) mention Vasiṣṭha and the Vasiṣṭhas, and both hymns end with the Vasiṣṭha clan refrain familiar from Maṇḍala VII.

X.65 (891) All Gods

Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

The poetic pedigree sketched above gives us high expectations for the hymn, which, however, begins unpromisingly with a simple enumeration of gods. Nonetheless, although the style never achieves the same distinction as that of the poet's putative relatives, there are many nice touches and twists and turns of syntax, particularly in verses 2–8, treating the cosmogonic deeds of the gods and the praise and sacrifice offered to them by mortals.

The hymn seems to begin anew with verse 9, which contains another straightforward listing of gods, continued in verse 10. A brief account of cosmogony (vs. 11) is

followed by a sketch of the Aśvins' deeds (vs. 12). Minor gods join the undifferentiated mass of All Gods in verses 13–14, and the hymn ends with Vasiṣṭha's summary verse.

1. Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Vāyu, Pūṣan, and Sarasvatī, of one accord,
   the Ādityas, Viṣṇu, the Maruts, the lofty Sun, Soma, Rudra, Aditi, Brahmaṇaspati,
2. Indra and Agni, the two lords of the settlement, spurring each other on mutually in the smashing of obstacles, sharing the same home—
   they (all) filled the great midspace with their might, as did Soma, glorious with ghee, rousing their greatness.
3. For by the greatness of these, the great and unassailable, I, recognizing the truth, rouse my praises for those who grow strong through truth.
   Let those who are bringing brilliant bounties (across) the watery flood grant them to us. I magnify the (heavenly clans) well allied (to us).
4. They propped up (the region) of solar glory, the midspaces, the realms of light, Heaven and Earth, the Broad One, with their might.
   Magnifying (them), bringing lovely gifts like strengthening nourishments, the gods are praised as patrons to the race of Manu.
5. Try your utmost for Mitra and for Varuṇa who does ritual service, the two sovereign kings who do not stay distant in their thought,
   whose lofty domain shines by reason of their ordinance, for whom the two world-halves are two opposing troops in need of help.
6. The cow [=offering ladle?] that goes around the (ritual) track to the appointed place, giving her milk, leading at the commandment (of Varuṇa), not by choice,
   she, being announced, will do ritual service to Varuṇa who (also) serves, to the gods, and to Vivasvant with the oblation.
7. Those ruling over heaven, with Agni as their tongue, growing strong through truth, sit stroking the womb of truth.
   Having propped up heaven, they brought the waters here by their might. Having given birth to the sacrifice, they clasped it to themselves.
8. The two parents born of old, encircling, sharing the same home, rule in the womb of truth:
   Heaven and Earth, who obey the same commandment to Varuṇa, swell the ghee-filled milk for Varuṇa, the buffalo.
9. Parjanya and Vāta, the two overflowing bulls, Indra and Vāyu, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman—
   we summon the gods—the Ādityas and Aditi (also)—who are earthly, heavenly, and in the waters.
10. O R̥bhus, (we beseech) Tvaṣṭar and Vāyu, who vaunts himself, the two divine Hotars, and Dawn, for well-being;
    we beseech Br̥haspati of good wisdom, the gnawer of Vr̥tra, and Soma, destined for Indra—we who win the stakes.

11. Those of good gifts, begetting the sacred formulation, the cow, the horse, the plants, the trees, the earth, the mountains, the waters,
    causing the sun to mount in heaven, loosing the Āryas' commandments upon the earth.
12. You rescue Bhujyu from difficult straits, o Aśvins. You gave life to Śyāva, the son of Vadhrimatī.
    You carried Kamadyū to Vimada. You let loose Viṣṇāpū for Viśvaka.
13. The daughter of Pavīru, Thunder, and Aja Ekapad, the supporter of heaven, the river, and the waters of the sea—
    all the gods will hear my words: (they and also) Sarasvatī, along with insights [/Dhī] and with plenty [/Puraṃdhī].
14. All the gods, along with insights and with plenty, worthy of Manu's sacrifice, immortal, recognizing the truth,
    the Escorts and the Gift-Escorts, finding the sun, should take pleasure in the sun, the songs, the sacred formulation, and the hymn.
15. Vasiṣṭha has extolled the immortal gods, who stand out over all living beings.
    Let them grant us wide-ranging space today. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

X.66 (892) All Gods

Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

The listing impulse found in the previous hymn is here carried further. The gods in general, groups of gods such as the Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudras, and individual gods both major and minor are invoked here, with conventional descriptors and predicates and with standard prayers for help and blessing. There is little to catch the attention in this hymn, though it is certainly competently done.

1. I call upon the gods of lofty fame for well-being—the makers of light, attentive to the rite,
   who, having all possessions, have grown even stronger, the immortals having Indra as their chief, grown strong through truth—
2. Who, thrust forth by Indra, directed forth by Varuṇa, attained a share of the light of the sun.
   We would set our thoughts on the community having the Maruts as their troop. In their generosity, they begot the sacrifice as its patrons.
3. Let Indra with the Vasus protect our livelihood on every side. Let Aditi with the Ādityas extend shelter to us.
   The god Rudra with the Rudras shall be merciful to us. Let Tvaṣṭar with the Wives (of the Gods) enliven us for good faring.

4. Aditi, Heaven and Earth, great truth, Indra and Viṣṇu, the Maruts, and the lofty Sun—
   we call upon the gods for help—the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, and well-skilled Savitar.
5. Sarasvant along with insights, Varuṇa whose commandments are upheld, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, the Greatness, Vāyu, and the Aśvins,
   the creators of sacred formulations, immortal, having all possessions, they will extend to us shelter providing threefold defense from difficult straits.
6. Let our sacrifice be a bull and those belonging to the sacrifice bulls, the gods bulls, and those making the oblation bulls;
   truthful Heaven and Earth bulls, Parjanya a bull, and those praising the bull bulls.
7. I entreat the bulls Agni and Soma in order to win the prize, those two bulls lauded by many.
   Those two to whom the bulls have sacrificed through their sacrifice to the gods, those two will spread out shelter providing threefold defense for us.
8. The rulers whose commandments are upheld, who bring forth the sacrifice, heaven-lofty ones, the full glory of the rite,
   whose Hotar is Agni, who serve the truth without deceit—they let loose the waters following on the triumph over Vr̥tra.
9. They begot heaven and earth to their commandments, and the waters, the plants, and the trees belonging to the sacrifice.
   They filled the midspace and the sun to give help. The gods clasped their will to themselves.
10. Let the upholders of heaven, the R̥bhus with skilled hands, let Vāta and Parjanya, (masters?) of Thunder the buffalo,
    let the waters and plants advance our songs. Let Bhaga, Gift, and the prizewinners come to my call.
11. The sea, the river, the dusky realm, the midspace; Aja Ekapad, Thundering, the flood,
    and Ahi Budhnya will hear my words, (also) all the gods and my patrons.
12. Might we (all) be Manus [=like Manu] for you, to pursue the gods. Lead our sacrifice forth toward the east straight to the goal.
    O Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus, of good gifts, give life to these sacred formulations as they are being recited.
13. The two divine Hotars, the first two set in front, do I follow along the path of truth straight to the goal.
    We beseech the lord of the field, our neighbor, and all the immortal gods, who do not stay distant.

14. The Vasiṣṭhas have made speech in the manner of their father, invoking the gods in the manner of that seer for well-being.
    Like pleased kinsmen, coming here at our desire, shake good things down upon us, o gods.
15. Vasiṣṭha has extolled the immortal gods, who stand out over all living beings.
    Let them grant us wide-ranging space today. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

The two hymns of Ayāsya Āṅgirasa (67–68) are particularly noteworthy treatments of Bṛhaspati and the Vala myth.

X.67 (893) Bṛhaspati

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

This is perhaps the clearest treatment of Bṛhaspati's role in the Vala myth and of his identity with Indra, the usual hero in the Vala story. As discussed above (see especially the introduction to IV.50), Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1968) has clearly shown that *bṛ́haspáti* was originally an epithet of Indra in his role as priest and formulator, a role that is highlighted in the Vala myth—since Indra opens the Vala cave and frees the cows not with his normal power and violence but with song and correctly crafted verbal formulae. In this hymn Bṛhaspati is credited with the deed, but in equivalence with Indra. The names are essentially superimposed upon each other, an equation made more obvious by their positioning: the name Bṛhaspati opens the second half-verse of verses 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and the more transparent version of his name, Brahmaṇaspati, is in the same position in verse 7. In the midst of this sequence, in the middle verse 6, we find Indra in initial position in the verse and credited with the same deed. The poet could hardly have made their identity clearer. (The final verse of the hymn [12] begins with the word Indra, here as hero of other stories, especially the Vṛtra myth.)

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the primal finding and production of a true insight; the unidentified "fourth one" in the second half of the verse probably refers to the fourth, inaudible portion of speech, or the fourth formulation, which figures prominently in Vedic speculations on the nature and power of speech (see Jamison 1991: 251–57). The second verse introduces the Aṅgirases, the crucial partners of Bṛhaspati/Indra in the opening of the Vala cave; they too find the truthful word. The next five verses (3–8) narrate the dramatic opening of the cave and the freeing of the cows. One notes a certain irony in the poet's treatment of Vala: though the cave is first depicted as a fetter (vs. 4) and a stronghold (vs. 5), it is described with the ambiguous term "guard" in verse 6 (a term as ambiguous in Sanskrit as it is in

English), and then with a more sarcastic tone "cow-nurturer" in verse 7 and "cow-herd" in verse 8.

The hymn ends with four verses celebrating the god and asking for blessings. Most interesting in this section is the final pāda of verse 10 (if we have rightly interpreted it), which alludes to the different poetic skills and styles of the mortal celebrants.

1. This seven-headed insightful thought here, born of truth and lofty, did our father find.
   The fourth one indeed did the irrepressible one, belonging to all men, generate as he was pronouncing a solemn speech for Indra.
2. Pronouncing the truth, thinking straight, the sons of heaven, the heroes of the lord,
   the Aṅgirases, establishing their inspired word [/laying their inspired track], pondered the first foundation of the sacrifice.
3. Along with his comrades, who were constantly gabbling like geese, while he was throwing open the fastenings made of stone,
   while he kept roaring to the cows, Bṛhaspati both started the praise song and struck up the melody, as knowing one.
4. With two (gates) below, with one above, the cows standing hidden in the fetter of untruth—
   Bṛhaspati, seeking light in the darkness, brought up the ruddy ones, for he opened up the three (gates).
5. Having split apart the stronghold (from front) to back, (having split apart) the lairs, at one blow he cut out the three [=dawn, sun, cow] from the reservoir.
   Bṛhaspati found the dawn, the sun, the cow, (found) the chant while he was thundering like heaven.
6. Indra cut apart Vala, the guard over the milkers, with a roar like a tool.
   Seeking the milk-mixture with (his comrades) anointed with sweat, he made the niggard wail: he stole the cows.
7. With his trusty comrades blazing, with the winners of spoils, he cleaved apart the cow-nurturer.
   The Lord of the Sacred Formulation reached through to the treasure with his bulls, his boars, with their hot sweat [/sweating over the gharma pot].
8. With trusty mind begging the cowherd for the cows, they compelled him with their insightful thoughts.
   Bṛhaspati loosed the ruddy ones upward, with his own yokemates who protect each other from fault.
9. With our propitious thoughts strengthening him, ever roaring in his seat like a lion,
   we would celebrate Bṛhaspati the bull, victorious at the contest of champions, victorious in every raid,

10. When he won the prize of all forms and mounted to heaven, to the higher seats.
    Bṛhaspati the bull (would we celebrate), strengthening him—though each (of us) brings light with our mouth in our own way.
11. Make our hope come true, our hope for the conferring of vigor. For you help even the weakling in your own ways.
    Let all slighters be off, be behind (us). You two world-halves, who set all in motion, hear this.
12. Indra with his greatness split apart the head of the great flood, of Arbuda.
    He smashed the serpent. He let flow the seven streams. O Heaven and Earth, along with the gods, further us.

X.68 (894) Bṛhaspati

Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

A wonderful hymn, which takes the fairly straightforward (though artful) narrative of the Vala myth in the preceding hymn (X.67) and embroiders each part of it with imaginative and studied imagery and verbal constructions. Most striking is the blizzard of similes, many having two and even three points of comparison (see, e.g., 5ab), or with simile piled on simile (see, e.g., 1c), or with complex social content (vs. 2). By contrast X.67 contains only four similes (3a, 5d, 6b, 9b), each with only one point of comparison—a number essentially reached in the first verse of this hymn.

As a particularly elaborate example consider the underlying content of verse 2, whose role in the mythic narrative is simply to state that Bṛhaspati reunited the Aṅgirases with their cows. But this reunion is compared to the ceremony of marriage and the participants are compared to the married couple and to the divinities who preside over marriage. (If we understood Vedic marriage ceremonies better, we might understand the verse better.) In the first half of the verse Bṛhaspati leads the unnamed Aṅgirases to reunion with the cows, just as Bhaga (Fortune or Good Fortune) leads Aryaman, the "civilizing" god of custom, one of whose roles is patron of marriage, to the marriage ceremony in order to preside. The ceremony itself is performed at the ritual fire, and in the third pāda of the verse Bṛhaspati is compared to Agni, under the designation "ally among the people" (several times used of Agni elsewhere). Just as Agni anoints the marrying couple with milk, so Bṛhaspati "anoints" the Aṅgirases (compared to the couple) with cows. The fact that the word for "ally" (*mitrá*) is identical to the divine name Mitra simply introduces another complication into this complicated verse. Since, as the next verse (3) makes clear, the cows are embodiments of civilization, of the social bonds that

unite the Ārya peoples, this remarkable verse is not just a poetic tour de force, but also an assertion of the centrality of social custom.

Another complex simile worth exploring is in the second half of verse 6, where the poet exploits the ambiguity of two words (*páriviṣṭam* and *ā́dat*) to deploy two distinct three-term comparisons simultaneously. The past passive participle *páriviṣṭam* can belong to either of two roots, √*viś* "enter," in which case the idiom means "surrounded, trapped," or √*viṣ* "work," in which case the idiom means "served." The verb *ā́dat* can belong to √*dā* "give," with preverb *ā́*, in which case the idiom means "take," or to √*ad* "eat." Combining these possibilities, we can interpret the image as that of the tongue worrying food caught between the teeth, or as the tongue and the teeth eating food that has been served. Either image can be appropriate to the removal of the cows from the cave, though we are partial to the notion of Bṛhaspati winkling out cows from every interior crevasse.

There is no need, or space, to dissect every simile; we can only invite the reader to savor the exuberance, the precision, and often the everyday nature of the imagery throughout the hymn and to consider the construction of these similes as forerunners of the kāvya style in Classical Sanskrit.

1. Constantly gabbling like water birds watching out for each other, like the sounds of booming (thunder) emanating from a cloud,
   exulting like waves stiff-peaked (like) mountains, the chants bellowed toward Bṛhaspati.
2. (Bellowing) with the cows, (Bṛhaspati) Aṅgiras, coming near, led (the Aṅgirases) together with the cows, as Bhaga leads Aryaman.
   As the ally among the people [=Agni] anoints the household pair, he anoints (the Aṅgirases). O Bṛhaspati, incite them like swift (horses) in a contest.
3. (The cows—) thoroughly civilized, providing for guests, vigorous, cherished, of lovely color and faultless form—
   Bṛhaspati, having brought them through, strewed the cows forth from the mountains, like grain from sacks.
4. Spraying the womb of truth with honey, flinging (it=honey?) down like a firebrand from heaven when the chant (sounded),
   Bṛhaspati, when he brought the cows up out of the stone, split asunder the skin of the earth as if (just) with water.
5. With his light he drove away the darkness from the midspace as the wind drives the *śīpāla*-plant from the water.
   Bṛhaspati, having (just) stroked (the skin/womb) of Vala, as the wind does a cloud, brought the cows here as his own.
6. When Bṛhaspati split the feebleness of taunting Vala with his fire-hot chants,
   he took (the cows) as the tongue takes (food) trapped by the teeth [/he "ate" (the cows?) as the tongue along with the teeth eats served (food)], and he revealed the hidden treasures of the ruddy (cows).

7. For Bṛhaspati brought to mind this very name of these who were resounding (with)in the seat—(the name) that was hidden.
   Having split the womb of the mountain like the eggs of a bird, he drove up the ruddy ones by himself.
8. He caught sight of the honey enclosed by the stone, like a fish living in shallow water.
   He extracted it, like a (wooden) cup from a tree—Bṛhaspati having cut apart (the mountain) with an (ear-)splitting cry.
9. He found the dawn, found the sun, found the fire; he thrust aside the dark shades with his chant [/ray].
   Bṛhaspati extracted (the cows) of Vala, whose beauty was the cows, like marrow from a joint.
10. As the woods (lament) their leaves stolen by cold, Vala lamented for the cows (stolen) by Bṛhaspati.
    He performed an inimitable (deed), not to be repeated as long as the sun and moon will rise in alternation.
11. Like a dusky horse with pearls, the Fathers ornamented the heaven with stars.
    In the night they placed darkness and light in the day. Bṛhaspati split the rock and found the cows.
12. This act of reverence here we have performed for the one belonging to the storm cloud, who keeps bellowing after the many (cows?):
    Bṛhaspati—for he shall confer vigor on us with cows, with horses, with heroes, with superior men.

Sumitra Vādhryaśva is said to be the composer of the next two hymns (69–70), one to Agni, one an Āprī hymn.

X.69 (869) Agni

Sumitra Vādhryaśva
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2

This hymn is discussed at length and translated in full by Proferes (2007: 40–44), who calls it "perhaps the clearest example of a tribal fire and the ritual role of the clans in relation to this fire. It illustrates the existence of a central fire tended by multiple clans who affirm through it their mutual solidarity, and who see in it the source of their domination over others" (p. 40). This particular clan-fire is that of King Vadhryaśva (see vss. 1–2, 4, 10–12), a speaking name with a deprecatory sense: "possessing gelded horses," and in fact the fire itself bears the patronymic "son/descendant of Vadhryaśva" (see vss. 5, 9, 12). The current fire is also contrasted with fire or fires kindled previously (vss. 4–5), and toward the end of the

hymn this fire present here is depicted as victorious over former fires, presumably belonging to other clans (vss. 10–11). Such victories are just an aspect of the victories over other peoples that the clan-fire brings Vadhryaśva and his allies, the men who kindle and tend this fire (vss. 5–6, 9–12).

One curious detail in the hymn is found in verse 7, where various possessions are ascribed to the fire (here called a craftsman), including "a thousand barren cows." The negative connotations of this property are immediately counteracted in the next verse (8ab), in which the fire is credited with having an abundantly fertile cow whose flow of milk is inexhaustible, but the great flock of barren cows is nonetheless odd. It finds its explanation in a semantic pun: just as the triumphant and successful Vadhryaśva bears the name "possessing gelded horses" so does his equally triumphant and successful fire "possess barren cows."

Stylistically there is much chaining of phraseology and repetition of syntactic patterns.

1. Auspicious are the manifestations of the fire of Vadhryaśva; his guidance
   is valuable; reverent approaches (to him) bring joy.
   When the clans that are good allies kindle him at the beginning,
   bepoured with ghee he awakens, flashing again and again.
2. The strengthener of the fire of Vadhryaśva is ghee; ghee is his food, ghee
   his fattener.
   Bepoured with ghee, he spreads out widely. He shines like the sun—his
   potion melted butter.
3. Which face of yours Manu kindled, which (did) the good ally, o Agni,
   that is this one here anew.
   Blaze richly; take pleasure in the songs. Break out the prize; confer
   fame here.
4. You whom Vadhryaśva, when reverently invoked, kindled formerly, o
   Agni, do you take pleasure in this (new face) here.
   Become the protector of our people and the protector of our own
   bodies. Guard the gift—whatever you have for us here.
5. Become possessed of brilliance, o son of Vadhryaśva, and our herdsman.
   Let the hostile intent of the peoples not overtake you.
   A rouser like a bold champion, a good ally—I shall now proclaim the
   name of Vadhryaśva's son.
6. The goods of the plains and the mountains, the Dāsa and the Ārya
   obstacles—you have conquered them entirely.
   A rouser of the peoples like a bold champion—you, o Agni, should
   dominate those who seek battle.
7. This fire here has a long thread and lofty oxen; the craftsman has a
   thousand barren cows and a hundred counsels.
   Brilliant among the brilliant (gods), being groomed by men, you will
   shine among the good allies who seek the gods.

8. O Jātavedas, in you is the milk-cow, yielding good milk, milking out nectar always in the same way, like the two [=Heaven and Earth] that never dry up.
   You, Agni, are kindled by men who receive the priestly gifts, by the good allies who seek the gods.
9. Even the immortal gods proclaimed your greatness, o Jātavedas, son of Vadhryaśva.
   When the clans of the sons of Manu came to negotiate, you conquered by means of the men whose strength is you.
10. Like a father his son, Vadhryaśva bore you on his lap as he served you, o Agni.
    And taking pleasure in his kindling, o youngest one, you vanquished the former (fires), even though they were greatly arrogant.
11. Over and over the fire of Vadhryaśva has conquered rivals by means of the men that provide the pressed soma.
    You burned even the (whole) crowd, o bright-beamed one; as strengthener you cut down even the greatly arrogant one.
12. Here is the fire of Vadhryaśva, the smasher of Vr̥tra, kindled from of old, to be addressed with reverence.
    Subjugate those, whether non-kin or estranged kin, who defy us, o son of Vadhryaśva.

X.70 (896) Āprī

Sumitra Vādhryaśva
11 verses: triṣṭubh

An eleven-verse Āprī hymn, with Narāśaṃsa in verse 2 (like II.3, V.5), where some Āprī hymns instead have Tanūnapāt (I.188, III.4, VII.2, IX.5, and X.110). There are otherwise few deviations from the standard Āprī hymn template, except that *r̥tvíj* "priest, orderly sacrificer" is substituted for the standard Hotar in verse 7. The trimeter meter gives more scope for elaboration than some of the more minimalist dimeter Āprī hymns (e.g., I.13). A signature word is *uśánt* "eager, desirous" (4d, 5c, 6c, 9d). As always in Āprī hymns, the key word or phrase in each verse is italicized.

1. Take pleasure in this *kindling* wood of mine, o Agni; delight in the ghee-covered (ladle) in the footprint of refreshment.
   On the height of the earth, on the brightest day of days, become upright, o very resolute one, together with our sacrifice to the gods.
2. As the lead driver of the gods, let *Narāśaṃsa* drive here with horses of every form

along the path of truth; with reverence the foremost of the gods will sweeten the ritual meal for the gods.

3. The sons of Manu, offering oblations, time and again *solemnly invoke* Agni to act as messenger:
   "With the best-conveying horses and with a smoothly rolling chariot, convey the gods here. Sit down here as our Hotar."
4. Pleasing to the gods, let it be spread out crosswise; long in length let it be sweet smelling for us.
   O divine *Ritual Grass*, with a mind without anger sacrifice to the gods, having Indra as their chief, who are eager for it.
5. Touch the wider back of heaven, or gape open along the measure of the earth.
   Eagerly, seeking the chariot, o *Doors*, with your greatness and with the great (gods) hold fast the divine chariot.
6. Let the two goddesses, the handsomely adorned daughters of Heaven, *Dawn and Night*, sit down in the womb.
   Let the eager gods sit here in the wide lap of you two eager ones who possess a good portion.
7. The pressing stone is upright; the fire has been loftily kindled: their own dear domains are in the lap of Aditi [=ritual ground?].
   You *two priests*—placed in front at this sacrifice, win material wealth by sacrifice, as the two who know better.
8. You three *goddesses*—sit here upon this wider ritual grass: we have made a comfortable place for you.
   As in the time of Manu, they—Iḷā, the goddess with feet of ghee, (and the other goddesses)—take pleasure in our sacrifice and our properly placed oblations.
9. God *Tvaṣṭar*, since you have attained loveliness and since you have come to be in the company of the Aṅgirases,
   (convey the sacrificial animal) forth to the fold of the gods, as you know how; eagerly perform the sacrifice, as one possessing treasure, o giver of material wealth.
10. O *Lord of the Forest*, harnessing it with a halter, convey it into the fold of the gods, as you know how.
    The god will sweeten and prepare the offerings. Let Heaven and Earth aid my call.
11. O Agni, convey Varuṇa here to our liking, also Indra from heaven and the Maruts from the midspace.
    Let them all, worthy of the sacrifice, sit on the ritual grass. Let the immortal gods bring themselves to exhilaration at the *svāhā-call.*

The next two very well-known and often anthologized hymns are attributed to the legendary Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, with alternative, equally legendary, authorship suggested for X.72. According to the Anukramaṇī, X.71 is dedicated to Jñāna "Wisdom" or "Knowledge," but it is knowledge in the form of sacred speech (Vāc). (The word *jñāna* does not occur in the hymn, or indeed in the Ṛgveda.) Hymn X.72, dedicated simply to the gods (Devāḥ) according to the Anukramaṇī, is a cosmogony focused on the origin of the divinities.

X.71 (897) Wisdom

Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 9

This hymn describes the mastery of sacred speech (*vā́c*), which is essential for the priests performing the soma rites. This mastery binds the priests together, establishing their "companionship" (vs. 2). The degree of mastery distinguishes one priest from another (vss. 4–5, 7–8), while the inability or unwillingness of some priests to employ sacred speech in performance marks them and their mastery as useless (vss. 6, 9). Using the language of horseracing, the poet speaks of the "competition" or "competitions" (*vā́jina*, vss. 5, 10) in which priests succeed through their mastery of speech. These "competitions" could be contests to determine which priests can best compose hymns or recite hymns and therefore which ones will be chosen to participate in a ritual performance. That kind of contest occurred and is likely described in verse 10ab. It is also true that the poem emphasizes the composer of the hymns: it begins with a reference to Bṛhaspati, the "Lord of the Sacred Formulation," and in the concluding list of priests, the *brahmán*, the "formulator," is the only one mentioned by name. But the "competitions" could also be the sacrifices themselves, which strive against one another for the attention and favor of the gods. If so, sacred speech is not contained just in the hymns, but constitutes all of the speech in the rite. This broader conception of sacred speech is implied in the reference to the "seven husky-voiced singers" (3d), who are likely the "seven Hotars," the seven priests of the sacrifice (cf. II.1.2), and the reference to four types of priests in the last verse.

The hymn begins by remembering the ancient seers (cf. vs. 3b, *ṛ́ṣi*), who first found the "hidden name." As Schmidt (1968: 124) suggests, the reference may be to the ancient seers who found the hidden name of the cows and so were able to release the imprisoned cows from the Vala cave (cf. X.68.7). Their concerted priestly action and effective priestly speech is then a model for contemporary priests, to whom the poet shifts in verse 2. These priests have also created the speech of the sacrifice, and their knowledge and their ability to articulate that speech bind them together as colleagues. Because sacred speech belongs to them, it carries their "mark" or "brand" (*lakṣmī́*, 2d). In verse 3 they found this speech

by the sacrifice, for it was in the words of the ancient seers, who were their ancestors and forerunners. They have brought that speech into the present and dispersed it throughout the sacrifice. Not everyone who would recite or compose is capable of doing so (vs. 4). Or, as verse 5a puts it, there are those who are "stiff and swollen in their companionship." This description is open to various interpretations, but "stiff and swollen" could apply to a corpse and here metaphorically describe someone who is useless, similar to the American expression "the guy's a stiff." Their talent is unproductive, "no milk-cow," and their words are sterile, bringing no "fruit or flower" (5d). Likewise, the uncooperative priest betrays the speech he perceives because only the priests together can perform the rite (vss. 6, 9). In verse 9cd the poet compares the speech in the sacrifice to the warp-threads on which the sacrifice is woven. But someone who does not use his knowledge and ability in the rite offers nothing more substantial than a stream of water and produces nothing worthwhile.

This hymn and its concentration on *vā́c* invites comparison with the famous self-praise pronounced by the goddess Vāc herself (X.125), though the tone of the two hymns is very different.

1. O Bṛhaspati, (this was) the first beginning of Speech: when they [=the seers] came forth, giving names.
   What was their best, what was flawless—that (name), set down in secret, was revealed to them because of your affection (for them).
2. When the wise have created Speech by their thought, purifying her like coarse grain by a sieve,
   in this they recognize their companionship as companions. Their auspicious mark has been set down upon Speech.
3. Through the sacrifice they followed the track of Speech. They found her having entered into the seers.
   Having brought her here, they dispersed her in many places. The seven husky-voiced singers together cry her out.
4. And many a one who sees has not seen Speech, and many a one who hears does not hear her.
   And for another she has stretched out her body, like an eager, well-dressed wife for her husband.
5. And they say that another is stiff and swollen in his companionship: him they do not spur on at all in the competitions.
   He moves with an artifice that is no milk-cow, having heard Speech without fruit or flower.
6. Who has abandoned the companion joined (to him) in knowledge, for him there is no share in Speech at all.
   When he hears her, he hears in vain, for he does not know the path of the rightly performed (ritual).

7. Though all have eyes and ears, the companions are unequal in quickness of mind.
   Some seem like ponds reaching up to the mouth or up to the armpits, and others seem like ponds good to bathe in.
8. When, in the mind's quickness that is fashioned in the heart, brahmins perform the sacrifice together as companions,
   then they leave behind some by their knowing ways and others range widely with their lauds and formulations.
9. Who move neither close nor far away, who are not brahmins, and who do not perform in the soma-pressing,
   they, having fallen upon speech in a bad way, stretch streams of water as their warp-thread, producing nothing.
10. All his companions rejoice with a companion who has come in glory, who is overpowering in the assembly,
    for, rescuing them from their errors and winning sustenance for them, he is fittingly spurred onward to the competition.
11. The one [=Hotar] sits, blooming a blooming of verses; the other [=Udgātar] sings a song in śakvarī verses.
    The one, the formulator [=Brahman], speaks the knowledge born (in him), and the other [=Adhvaryu] measures out the measure of the sacrifice.

X.72 (898) The Gods

Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, Bṛhaspati Laukya, or Aditi Dākṣāyaṇī
9 verses: anuṣṭubh

Geldner remarks that the hymn almost seems as if the poet intentionally wanted to show the insolubility of the problem of the origin of things by setting incompatible theories of cosmogony alongside one another. While we find greater coherence than this, we recognize the complexities and uncertainties that caused Geldner to come to this conclusion. At least at a very general level, the hymn does show a cosmogonic progression from "what is not existing" to "what is existing" and finally to immortal gods and mortal humans.

The hymn also has thematic elements in common with the preceding hymn. The most obvious is that *bráhmaṇas pátiḥ*, the Lord of the Sacred Formulation (vs. 2), is Bṛhaspati, who is invoked at the beginning of X.71. Then too, while it has the appearance of a cosmogony, the hymn also makes repeated reference to sacrificial performance. One thematic strand of this hymn is that the sacrifice embodies the principles that gave rise to the world.

In verse 3 what Bṛhaspati "smelted" is the "births" of the gods, as Sāyaṇa already noted. Bṛhaspati brings them about by means of a sacred formulation (*bráhman*)

expressing the origins of the gods. But such a formulation can also bring about the birth of the gods in a specific ritual place at the time of a ritual performance. In that way, words—or the thoughts behind words—can make beings real. Perhaps this is what the poet means when in verse 2d he says that "what exists," what are "things" (the world, the gods, and humans), was born from "what does not exist," what are not "things" (thoughts or words).

In verse 3cd "the one whose feet were opened up" gives rise to what exists, which in turn gives rise to the regions of space. But in 4ab "the one whose feet were opened up" gives rise to the earth, which gives rise to the regions. That is to say, between the two hemistichs, there is a shift in the middle term: "what exists" in verse 3 and "the earth" in verse 4. The key to the significance of this shift is the word *bhū́* "the earth." "The earth" is only one possible translation; the word could also mean a "form" that something assumes (cf. III.55.13b=X.27.14d) or, etymologically at least, the act of "becoming." If the ambiguity is intentional, then the two verses together redefine "what exists" as that which has material substance—most broadly the earth or more specifically what has form.

The source of "what exists" or "the earth" is the principle or entity described as "one whose feet were opened up" (*uttānápad*). Falk (1994: 7–10) understands *uttāná* to describe something whose feet are "turned upward," perhaps the upside-down world tree with its roots above. We take the more common approach in seeing here an image of birth or possibly sexual availability. But then whose feet are these? If the answer is inside the hymn, then it might be the goddess Aditi, who appears in verse 4 and is a mother of the gods in verses 8–9. Or again, since "what exists" (*sát*) is said to have arisen from "what does not exist" (*ásat*) in verses 2 and 3, there is perhaps an implied identification of "the one whose feet were opened up" with "what does not exist." Whoever or whatever the *uttānápad* may be, the term also contains an oblique reference to the lower *aráṇī*, one of the pieces of wood used to kindle the sacrificial fire. See, for example, III.29.3ab addressing the priests, *uttānā́yām áva bharā cikitvā́n, sadyáḥ právītā vŕ̥ṣaṇam jajāna* "Attentive, bear down upon her who is opened up (*uttānā́*) [=the lower fire-churning stick]. Impregnated on this day, she has given birth to the bull [=Agni]." That is to say, the appearance of fire from the fire-churning wood replicates the emergence of "what exists" from "what does not exist."

In verse 4cd the poet describes the paradoxical birth of Aditi from Dakṣa and Dakṣa from Aditi. Aditi is not only a goddess, but also a principle, the principle of Innocence or Offenselessness against the gods. Likewise, Dakṣa can be a god personifying ritual Skill. Their birth from one another may signify the mutual dependence of freedom from offense against the gods and ritual skill, both of which are necessary to carry out the sacrifice. Similarly, there may also be reference to the sacrifice in verse 5d, in which the gods are said to be *amŕ̥tabandhavaḥ*. The compound can mean that the gods are kin of the "immortal" Soma or Agni or that they are kin "to immortality" or that they are connected to the immortal waters (Falk 1994: 13). There are possible references to the ritual or ritual mythology in the succeeding

verses as well. Thus, in 6d *tīvrá*, "sharp" or "bitter," is a typical description of soma. Or again in 7a the Yatis are ritual priests, whose death resulted in the rains that swell "the living worlds" (cf. Jamison 1991: 111). And finally in 7cd the sun in the waters can be a figure describing soma (cf. Oberlies 1999: 164–65) or fire.

The last two verses describe the birth of immortals, Aditi's "seven sons," with whom she went to the ancient generation of gods (vs. 9ab), and the birth of mortals, who are born from a "dead egg" (Hoffmann 1976b [=1992: 723]), a divine miscarriage, both "for procreation" and "for death" (9cd).

As a cosmology the hymn invites comparison with X.129.

1. Now amid acclaim we will proclaim the births of the gods,
   so that one in a later generation will see (them) as the hymns are recited.
2. The Lord of the Sacred Formulation [=Bṛhaspati] smelted these (births) like a smith.
   In the ancient generation of the gods, what exists was born from what does not exist.
3. In the first generation of the gods, what exists was born from what does not exist.
   The regions of space were born following that (which exists)—that (which exists) was born from the one whose feet were opened up.
4. The earth was born from the one whose feet were opened up; from the earth the regions of space were born.
   From Aditi, Dakṣa was born, and from Dakṣa, Aditi.
5. Because Aditi was born—she who is your daughter, o Dakṣa—
   following her, the gods were born, the auspicious kin of the immortal one.
6. When, o gods, well clasped to one another, you stood there in the ocean,
   then the bitter dust [=spray] dispersed from you, like (the dust [=sweat?]) of those dancing.
7. When, o gods, just as the Yatis did, you swelled the living worlds,
   then you brought here the sun, which was hidden in the sea.
8. Eight are the sons of Aditi, which were born from her body.
   With seven she went forth to the gods. She cast away the one stemming from a dead egg.
9. With seven sons Aditi went forth to the ancient generation.
   For procreation but also for death, she brought here again the one stemming from a dead egg.

Two hymns to Indra (73–74) are ascribed to Gaurivīti Śaktyā; the first is quite complex, the second quite straightforward.

X.73 (899) Indra

Gaurivīti Śaktyā
11 verses: triṣṭubh

A dense and difficult hymn, with many cryptic allusions to Indra's birth and some of his exploits. The Anukramaṇī ascribes it to the same poet as V.29, the first Indra hymn in the Vth Maṇḍala, and indeed this hymn has links to some of the fragmentary narratives in the early Indra hymns of V, especially V.30 and 31.

The hymn begins and ends with the birth of Indra; the unusual and difficult nature of that birth was also the subject of IV.18. In verses 1–2ab it seems that Indra's mother was beset with some trouble at the time of his birth. Nonetheless, he was successfully born but required strengthening by the Maruts. The account of his birth at the beginning of the hymn is quite straightforward when compared to the one given in verse 10, where several alternative sources of Indra are suggested. The common opinion seems to be that he "came from a (male) horse," though "I" (the poet) have a different view. And the last word (or non-word) is Indra's: "whence he was born, only Indra knows that."

The material immediately after the birth story is extremely cryptic, and our interpretation is quite speculative. We believe that verses 2cd–5ab combine two motifs: a ritual situation, the early-morning sacrifice, and a mythological one, the image of Indra as cosmic begetter and tender parent. The dawn ritual is suggested by the Aśvins' journey to the sacrifice with Indra (3d, 4b) and the apparent mention of early morning in 2d. The mythological material is harder to evaluate and to bring into a coherent schema. In 2cd it seems that something, quite possibly the worlds, were covered, perhaps sexually, by a "great foot(print)," and from the darkness there came embryos, presumably engendered in this encounter. Since Indra's feet are mentioned in the next verse (3a), it seems likely that the "great foot" in verse 2 is Indra, covering the worlds and begetting the embryos.

Verse 4 brings us the curious image of Indra with a thousand hyenas in his mouth. Though Geldner, for example, considers this simply a measure of how big a mouth Indra has and specifically denies that it has anything to do with the widespread Brāhmaṇa stories of Indra and the hyenas, this seems disingenuous. Since the hyena word appears only twice in the R̥gveda and only once in conjunction with Indra, it seems perverse not to explore the possible connection with these later tales. The Brāhmaṇa narratives and the light they may shed on this passage are discussed at length in Jamison (1991: pt 1). Suffice it to say that hyenas carry their young around in their mouths like cats, and the image here suggests that Indra is functioning as an attentive parent to his brood. Another aspect of Indra's parental role may be found in the next verse (4cd), where Indra "makes fast" thousands in an otherwise unidentified female: "make fast" seems a reasonable euphemism for impregnate or implant embryos. This section concerning Indra's fatherhood seems to come to an end in 5ab.

After this we turn to Indra's great deeds, especially the slaying of Namuci (5cd–7), a deed also treated in the related hymn V.30.7–8. Why the abrupt switch from Indra as parent to Indra as killer? The answer probably lies in the early-morning context of this hymn. Indra famously vowed not to kill Namuci by day or by night, or with a weapon dry or wet. The weapon, according to later accounts, was foam (also glancingly alluded to in VIII.14.13), and the time of slaughter the morning twilight—the exact time depicted in the hymn. We also consider the "darkening mists and darkness" of 5d to be the weapon used for the slaughter (rather than the later foam), since mist, too, counts neither as wet nor as dry. This mist, diffused like smoke, though directed at Namuci, settles "even on the two of the same name," whom we identify as the Aśvins, mentioned several times previously in the hymn, who make their journey during the early morning twilight.

Verse 8 summarizes Indra's accomplishment of his deeds by way of his epithets and acknowledges the applause of the gods, but it ends (8d) with a cryptic allusion to another of Indra's deeds, continued, in our view, in the first pāda of verse 9. Another tale favored in the early Indra hymns of Maṇḍala V is the chariot race between Indra and the Sun, in which Indra steals the Sun's wheel and puts his chariot in front of the Sun's, though it had been behind (see, e.g., V.31.11). The "topsy-turvy" outcome of 8d and the stuck wheel of 9a are suggestive of this myth. The rest of verse 9 simply celebrates Indra's fructifying of the plants and animals, which may remind us of his parental role earlier in the hymn, and with verse 10 we return to his mysterious birth. In the final verse (11) the poets ask Indra for aid in their plight.

1. You were born as the strong one for powerful might, the gladdening strongest one with manifold designs.
   It was just the Maruts who strengthened Indra then, when his mother, best at pushing (in childbirth) [/running], was going to set the hero to running.
2. She, even though caressing (him), was sunk down because of the activities of (demonic?) deceit. They [=Maruts] strengthened Indra much with their laud.
   These (worlds) were as if covered over [/sexually "covered"] by a great footprint [=Indra]. From the dark, from the early morning, embryos arose.
3. Lofty are your feet when you go forth. The Vājas and whatever (others) were there strengthened (you).
   You, Indra, took a thousand young hyenas in your mouth. You should turn the Aśvins hither.
4. In the same way—swiftly—you drive to the sacrifice; convey the Nāsatyas hither for fellowship.
   Indra, you made fast thousands in the wife of the good one [=impregnated her?]; the Aśvins gave bounties, o champion.

5. Becoming exhilarated, to produce progeny from truth, Indra (went) to the goal with his vigorous comrades.
   Because with these (wiles of his) he came right up to the Dasyu [=Namuci], to *his* wiles, he scattered forth darkening mists and darkness.
6. You sent the smoke for him [=Namuci] down even on the two of the same name [=Aśvins]; you smashed (him) down, Indra, like the cart of Dawn.
   You went with your lofty, avid comrades; at one blow you smashed his heart's foundations.
7. You smote Namuci who sought combat, rendering the Dāsa without wiles, for the seer.
   You made the paths comfortable for Manu, as if they went straightaway to the gods.
8. You have fulfilled your names completely; showing mastery, you have taken (them) in your fist.
   The gods cheer you on in your vast power. You turned the wooden things [=chariots?] topsy-turvy,
9. When his wheel was sunk down in the waters. And that should seem just honey to him,
   the udder bound tight onto the earth, the milk that you placed in the cows and in the plants.
10. When they say, "he came from a horse," I think of him rather as born from strength:
    he came from (battle) fervor; he stayed in a secure house [=womb?]. But whence he was born, (only) Indra knows that.
11. The fine-feathered birds have flocked to Indra—the Priyamedhas, seers in need.
    Open up the dark (place); fill our eye. Free us who are bound as if by a snare.

X.74 (900) Indra

Gaurivīti Śaktyā
6 verses: triṣṭubh

Although attributed to the same poet as the last hymn and also dedicated to Indra, this hymn fortunately lacks the challenges that X.73 poses—and in fact takes awhile to get to Indra. The first three verses simply announce the poet's intention to praise the gods and ask them to travel to the sacrifice with goods to bestow. The last three verses (4–6) turn to Indra exclusively, suggesting first in verse 4, via an allusion to the Vala myth and, possibly, to the Maruts' mother

Pṛśni, the sacrificers' desire for cows and sons. More praise for Indra follows in verses 5–6, with the final pāda (6d) expressing the expectation that Indra will fulfill our desires.

1. Seeking to gain (their favor), I pay tribute to the Vasus or to the two world-halves, by inspired thought or by sacrifices,
   or to the steeds that become rich at the (occasion for) winning, or to those who hear well [=gods] who set the eager one to find good hearing.
2. At the invocation to them the lordly one [=Agni] will reach heaven; with a mind seeking fame he will kiss the earth,
   at the time when the gods, looking for easy passage, will equip themselves with their own choice things, like heaven (with stars).
3. Here is the song for these immortals, who in their entirety long for (it as their) treasure.
   Bringing to success both inspired thought and sacrifice, let them establish a mass of goods for us, and not by halves.
4. The Āyus admire this (greatness?) of yours, Indra—they who will wish to drill through to the enclosure full of cows [=Vala],
   who wish to milk the great (cow [=Pṛśni?]) who gives birth only once but has many sons, the lofty one with a thousand streams.
5. Cause able Indra to help you—the unbowable one who subdues the battlers,
   the master of the Ṛbhus, liberal, who (receives) well-twisted (hymns), the possessor of many cattle who bears the mace appropriate to superior men.
6. When the previous victor won the latest of many, Indra the Vṛtra-smasher fulfilled his names:
   he appeared as the powerful lord of victory. What we wish him to do, that he will do.

The next two hymns (75–76) are attributed to different poets, at least the second quite fancifully, by the Anukramaṇī, but clearly form a dyad (Oldenberg 1888: 236 n. 3). The first is devoted to the rivers, the second to the pressing stones.

X.75 (901) Rivers

Sindhukṣit Praiyamedha
9 verses: jagatī

This hymn celebrates the headlong glories of rivers, especially the Sindhu, here presented as the principal river into which all the others flow (see esp. vs. 4). As with

the hymns to Sarasvatī (VI.61, VII.95–96), this one contains both naturalistic, if hyperbolic, description of the river (vss. 3, 7) and depictions of her as a beautiful woman and a prizewinning horse. Especially notable in the hymn is the litany of river names in verses 5–6, which many scholars have mined for geographical information.

1. At the seat of Vivasvant [=ritual ground] the bard will speak forth your highest greatness, o waters,
   for forth they strode in three stages, seven each time; forth (strode) Sindhu with her strength, beyond that of the (other) flowing (waters).
2. Varuṇa dug out the paths for you to travel, when, o Sindhu, you ran to the prizes.
   You travel on a slope along the back of the earth, when you direct the front rank of these moving (beings).
3. Her sound takes its place in heaven, above the earth. She sends up snorting without end along with radiance.
   Like rains from a cloud her "rains" thunder forth, when Sindhu goes like an ever-bellowing bull.
4. To you, Sindhu, like mothers to their young, like milk-cows with their milk do they [=tributary rivers] rush bellowing.
   It's you who lead them as a battling king does the two "seams" (of the army), when you seek to reach the front rank of these sloping (waters).
5. Here, o Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī—attend on this praise of mine, o Śutudrī, Paruṣṇī.
   With the Asiknī, o Marudvr̥dhā, with the Vitastā, o Ārjīkīyā, harken, with the Suṣomā.
6. To travel first joined with the Tr̥ṣṭāmā, (then) with the Susartū, the Rasā, and this Śvetyā,
   you, o Sindhu, (come) with the Kubhā to the Gomatī, with the Mehatnū to the Krumu, on the same chariot (with all these), with which you go speeding.
7. Straight in her course, mottled, glistening, in her greatness she holds encircled the expanses, the dusky realms—
   the undeceivable Sindhu, busiest of the busy, dappled-bright like a mare, lovely to see like a beautiful woman.
8. Sindhu has lovely horses, lovely chariots, lovely garments; she is golden, well-fashioned, rich in prize mares;
   the young woman is rich in wool [=foam], in *sīlamā* (plants?); and the well-portioned one puts on (a garment/plant) increasing the honey.
9. Sindhu has yoked her own well-naved, horsed chariot; with it she will gain the prize in this contest here,
   for the great greatness of it invites admiration—it undeceivable, self-glorious, conferring abundance.

X.76 (902) Pressing Stones

The snake Jaratkarṇa Airāvata
8 verses: jagatī

Of the three hymns dedicated to the pressing stones (X.76, X.94, and X.175), X.175 is brief and minimalist. Hymns X.94 and X.76 have a number of phrases and images in common, but X.94 is more charming than X.76, with vivid and imaginative comparisons and a light tone, while X.76 is perhaps more rhetorically ambitious, with some mythological and cosmic resonances, as well as some challenging syntax. The stones are more often addressed in the 2nd person and with imperatives in X.76 (no imperatives are addressed to the stones in X.94). This implicit attribution of agency to the stones becomes more pronounced toward the end of this hymn, where they seem to supplant the human pressers. The word *náraḥ* "superior men" is found in verses 6–8; although the first two occurrences could be interpreted as referring to humans, the last is a vocative addressed to the stones—which makes it clear that in the previous two verses the "men" must be the stones as well.

1. I stretch straight toward you at the first dawn flushes of nourishment.
   Anoint Indra, the Maruts, and the two world-halves,
   so that both day and night, in partnership, will make every seat spacious
   for us as they break out.
2. Press this as the best pressing. Like a racehorse controlled by the hands,
   the stone is in (the control of) the presser.
   Because it finds the masculine power that is overwhelming to the
   stranger, for the sake of great wealth he [=presser] also attains to (that
   masculine power), which (comes) from the steed [=stone].
3. For it has labored at just this pressing, at its task. Just as previously
   (Indra) set the course for Manu
   to Tvaṣṭar's (wealth?), which was flooding with cows and arrayed in
   horses, they have set ceremonies upon ceremonies.
4. Smash away the demons with their wreckage. Block Dissolution. Repel
   heedlessness.
   Press out wealth in hale heroes for us. Carry a tune that pursues the
   gods, you stones.
5. To you, more formidable even than Heaven, swifter working even than
   Vibhvan,
   more soma-frenzied even than Vāyu, better food-preparers even than
   Agni—sing!
6. Let the glorious ones clatter for us—let it press (soma) out of the stalk—
   the stones with their voice, (which is) heaven-bound, heavenly,
   when the superior men milk the desirable honey for themselves, making
   (Heaven and Earth) heed all about as they [=stones] cross each other
   transversely.

7. The stones, the charioteers, press the soma. They milk out the juice of him who seeks the cows.
   They milk the udder, to pour it out. As superior men they groom (the soma), like oblations, with their mouths.
8. You superior men, you have become the good workers who press soma for Indra—you stones.
   Every thing of value of yours is for the heavenly domain; every good thing of yours for the earthly presser.

The next two hymns (77–78), attributed to Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava and dedicated to the Maruts, share an unusual metrical structure and a rhetorical scheme. Although according to the Anukramaṇī the meter is triṣṭubh, in fact in X.77 only the last three verses (6–8) really conform to that meter, and in X.78 only the last (8). Most of the rest of the verses have eleven-syllable pādas, as is diagnostic of triṣṭubh, but clear jagatī cadences, an even more diagnostic test. As Oldenberg has shown (1888: 92–95), most such pādas have an opening of five syllables, ending with a light syllable (regularly *ná* "like"), followed by two heavy syllables, the first of which seems to substitute for the double-light break usual after an opening of five. (There is also often a word-break after these two heavy syllables, seeming to produce a second caesura in the line.) The apparent equivalence of the heavy sixth syllable with two light syllables introduces a principle of substitution or responsion not otherwise found in Vedic, or most Classical Sanskrit, meters, a principle that only achieves prominence in the Āryā meter quite possibly deriving from Middle Indo-Aryan.

X.77 (903) Maruts

Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh (and mangled jagatī)

On the metrical structure, see the introduction just above.

Rhetorically the hymn (through vs. 5) is dominated by similes, often studied and syntactically complex ones, with three or four similes in every verse. When the dense concentration of similes ends (beginning with vs. 6), the meter returns to conventional triṣṭubh and to conventional hymn-ending expressions of hope for favor.

Most of the descriptions of the Maruts, however contorted their syntax, belong to the familiar repertoire of Marut characteristics: their stormy nature, their association with Indra, their beauty and ornaments, their boisterousness. However, twice they are connected with the Ādityas (vss. 2d, 8b), a group of gods with which they generally have nothing in common. This connection is puzzling. Thieme (1938: 158) suggests that their common quality was "caring for the stranger" (if that is what the disputed word *ríśādas*, also found twice in the hymn [vss. 3, 5], means).

1. Like (the Maruts) showering (rain) from a cloud with their speech [=thunder], I will shower goods with my speech. The sacrifices of a discerning one [=poet] are like [=just as good as] those provided with oblations.
   I have praised the flock of them as if praising the Formulator [=Indra?], who is well provided with Maruts—have praised them for their worthiness (of soma), as if for their beauty.
2. For their splendor the young bloods have provided themselves with ornaments across the many nights, just as they have made (the Formulator) well provided with Maruts.
   The sons of heaven have taken their places like antelopes; (as) Ādityas they have grown strong like foals [?].
3. Those who by themselves project beyond heaven as beyond earth mightily, like the sun beyond the clouds,
   inviting admiration like heroes of (great) dimension, heaven-bound like young bloods who care for the stranger.
4. At your journey—as if (resting) on a base of waters, as if going with faltering step, the great (earth) becomes slack.
   There is a sacrifice consisting of all good things close by. It is for you. Like dispensers of ritual delight, come here to those who are concentrated (on you).
5. With your reins [/rays] you are like (horses) hitched up to the chariot-poles—like light-bearing (fires) at the early brightenings with your beam—
   self-glorious like falcons, caring for the stranger—when (just) launched, (you are) like water birds, showering (drops) all around.
6. When you drive yourselves forth from afar, Maruts, you (come as) the ones who know of the great enclosure of goods,
   of goods to be realized, o good ones. Even from a distance keep hatred far away.
7. The descendant of Manu who, like (Agni) standing up at the ceremony, will do ritual service to the Maruts at the sacrifice when the chant is raised,
   he will acquire rich vitality abounding in good heroes. Let him be in the protection of the gods.
8. For they are helpers worthy to receive sacrifice at the sacrifices, the best luck-bringers, by the Ādityan name.
   Let them aid our inspiration, (like a horse) that outstrips chariots, as they take pleasure in the journey of their great (host) and in the ceremony.

X.78 (904) Maruts

Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh and jagatī

This hymn has the same unusual meter as X.77 and, like X.77, is structured as a series of similes. In fact, this hymn goes further than the previous hymn in both features. The only standard triṣṭubh verse is the final one (8), which also breaks the rhetorical pattern. And the similes not only continue throughout the hymn (until vs. 8) but are under more rigid syntactic control. It is worth discussing in some detail how the poet has crafted his hymn and how the apparently rigid repetitive structure, with each pāda containing exactly one simile, still allows the possibility of forward momentum and rhetorical climax. (See also Jamison 2007: 77–79.)

Each of the first seven verses of this eight-verse hymn contains four pāda-length similes, each marked with *ná* "like," and with the point of comparison almost always positioned at pāda-end. Since in runs of similes it is common to alternate between the simile-markers *ná* and *iva*, the complete avoidance of *iva* in this hymn is noteworthy and the regular repetition of *ná* contributes to the sense of regimentation. Furthermore, the *ná* is almost exclusively in second position in the pāda and is generally the last syllable of the opening (before an often irregular break: see the introduction to X.77).

All of these similes are in the nominative plural masculine, with the Maruts always the subject. This rigid syntactic structure, reinforced by its coinciding exactly with metrical units, has an almost claustrophobic effect—an effect significantly enhanced by the fact that the first six verses are entirely nominal in their syntax: in these twenty-four separate clausal similes there is *not one* finite verb or even predicated participle. (This exclusively nominal style cannot be entirely captured in translation.) This syntactic stasis contrasts markedly with the nature of the subjects being celebrated, for the Maruts are the most active gods in the R̥gveda. Moreover, many of the similes in this hymn concern the Maruts' uncontrollable energy, despite the motionless quality of the poetic form. The disjunction between content and form produces a remarkable aesthetic effect. Yet the effect is not of complete stasis even in these verses, for the subjects of the similes modulate from verse to verse, while the complexity of imagery increases gradually. For examples, the winds appear in verses 2 and 3 in different images, likewise bride-seeking young men in verses 4 and 5, with two types of stones and two types of mothers in verse 6.

And then finally in verse 7 the straitjacket of nominal style is broken: though this verse, too, contains four pāda-length similes, both hemistichs end with finite verbs, 7b *vy àśvitan* "they have shone forth," 7d *mamire* "they have measured." While maintaining the underlying structure that unifies the hymn, the poet manages, by strictly grammatical means, to build to a climax. The energy kept suppressed by the nominal style is finally released by the finite verbs of verse 7.

The last verse (8), which is, as noted, the only standard triṣṭubh, abandons the structure of the rest of the hymn, and in conventional terms asks the gods for the usual gifts, as so often in final verses. But it is noteworthy for containing the first and only occurrence of the name *marút* in the hymn. Retroactively we can see that the hymn also functions as a very long riddle, whose answer is given only in this last verse. This verse is linked to what precedes by a small and subtle verbal device. As noted, twenty-five of the twenty-eight preceding pādas begin X *ná*, with the simile marker in second position; verse 8 begins X *no* (i.e., *naḥ* "us"). The poet invites us to expect yet another simile, but substitutes the phonetically similar 1st-person plural enclitic pronoun in its place. Thus, though the verse is cast in entirely different stylistic terms from the rest of the hymn, its integral connection to what precedes is signaled by the playful *naḥ*. (Note that the *naḥ* is entirely unnecessary in this verse, since it redundantly doubles and anticipates the full pronoun *asmā́n* opening the second pāda.)

1. Rich in purpose like inspired poets with their thoughts, rich in profit like those who pursue the gods with sacrifices,
   lovely to look at like brilliant kings, unblemished like the young bloods of the settlements—
2. Who, with brilliants on their breasts, are like fire with their flash; like the winds, their own yokemates, bringing immediate aid;
   providing good guidance like elders who think ahead, providing good shelter like soma drinks to the one pursuing truth—
3. Who like the boisterous winds are always on the move, radiating like the tongues of fires,
   vehement like armored warriors, bringing lovely gifts like the lauds of the ancestors—
4. Who, like the spokes of chariots, have the same nave(l), heaven bound like victorious champions,
   showering ghee [=rain] as young bloods gone awooing shower (goods), of good rhythm like those who sound a chant—
5. Who are swift like superior horses, of good gifts [/drops] like charioteers seeking to acquire (brides),
   always on the move with their moisture like the waters with their depths, displaying all forms through their melodies like the Aṅgirases—
6. Like pressing stones, the patrons have a river as their mother; like rocks they always keep pounding.
   Playful like little children with good mothers, like a great host (of warriors) on their journey and with their turmoil—
7. Like the beacons of the dawns providing splendor to the ceremony, like those in pursuit of beauty they have shone forth with their ornaments—

coursing like rivers, those with glinting spears have measured out the stages of their journey like the distant realms.

8. O gods, make us possessed of good portions, good treasures, strengthening us as your praisers, o Maruts, when you have been strengthened.
   Give study to our praise song, to our fellowship. For from long ago occasions for the conferring of treasures have been yours.

The next two Agni hymns (79–80) belong together.

X.79 (905) Agni

Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara or Sapti Vājambhara
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn begins with a 1st-person vision ("I have seen . . . ") and in its middle verse (4) announces a truth, again in the 1st person—though the speaker disclaims real discernment for himself, while ascribing it to the god Agni. Such rhetorical moves are typical of omphalos hymns, but the mystery in this hymn seems less profound than the structure in which it is embedded seems to promise. It is simply the common trope of Agni as an insatiable eater, with a nice twist in verse 6, where the poet commiserates with Agni for having, because of imagined sins, to eat without teeth. Although the supposed enigma of this hymn is not particularly enigmatic, the style is lively and the images sharp.

1. I have seen the greatness of him, the great one, of the immortal one among the mortal clans.
   His jaws are alternately opened up and closed together again. Insatiable, gnawing, they eat amply.
2. His head is deposited in hiding; his eyes set apart. Insatiable, he eats the wood with his tongue.
   With their feet they [=priests] collect things for him to eat, their hands outstretched with reverence among the clans.
3. Questing further and further for the hidden place of his mother like a child, he creeps through the wide plants.
   He [=priest?] found him, gleaming like ripened grain, licking within the lap of the mount [?].
4. I proclaim this truth to you, o you two World-Halves: while being born, the embryo eats his two mothers [=kindling sticks].
   As a mortal, I do not discern the god, but Agni certainly discerns afar and discerns ahead.

5. Whoever sets out dry food for him, pours oblations with melted butter and ghee for him, and prospers (him),
   for that (man) you gaze afar with your thousand eyes. Agni, you face in every direction.
6. What sin of omission or commission have you done before the gods? I now ask you, Agni, since I do not know.
   Whether at play or not, tawny (Agni) has to eat without teeth. You have cut apart (the wood) piece by piece, as a knife does a cow joint by joint.
7. Born in the wood, he has yoked his own horses that face in all directions, controlled by reins that stretch straight.
   Our well-born ally has carved up (the meal) together with the good (gods); he has come together with (all) his parts, having grown strong.

X.80 (906) Agni

Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara
7 verses: triṣṭubh

The most salient feature of this hymn is the form of the word *agní* that begins every pāda. In the first half of the hymn (vss. 1–4) the form is almost exclusively nominative singular (save for the genitives in 2a and 4d), while the second half has primarily the accusative. As so often, the final verse breaks the pattern: the first trisyllabic form (dat. *agnáye* in 7a) is followed by two vocatives (*ágne*) in the last hemistich (7cd), a simple grammatical switch that turns the insistently descriptive 3rd-person cast of the rest of the hymn into a direct, 2nd-person plea to the god for help and wealth.

The actual contents of the hymn are subordinated to this formal structure. Most of the first half of the hymn is devoted to detailing the gifts and aid that Agni generally provides, though verse 3 briskly mentions four mythological precedents where Agni has aided specific individuals, somewhat in the style of the catalogues of good deeds in Aśvin hymns. (In fact, the only reasonably well-known figure in vs. 3 is Atri [3c], whose rescue is usually attributed to the Aśvins.) Verses 5–6 establish Agni as the target of all creatures in need. In the final verse (7) the poet both announces his hymn, produced on the model of the R̥bhus, and states what he wants in return.

1. Agni gives a prize-bringing team; Agni (gives) a hero, worthy of fame, outstanding through his work—
   Agni roams widely through the two world-halves, anointing them completely—Agni (gives) a woman with a hero in her belly, Plenitude (herself).

2. Let Agni's kindling be auspicious and of profit. Agni has entered the two great world-halves.
   Agni propels the one in battles; Agni divides up the many obstacles.
3. Agni helped this Jaratkarṇa [/ear of the old man]; Agni burned Jarūtha out from the waters.
   Agni gave freedom to Atri, (who was) within the hot vessel; Agni brought Nr̥medha together with offspring.
4. Agni gives wealth whose ornament is heroes; Agni (gives) a seer who wins thousands.
   Agni stretches the oblation to heaven; Agni's domains are dispersed in many places.
5. It's Agni whom seers vie in calling upon with their recitations; Agni (do) men when hard-pressed on an expedition;
   Agni (do) birds flying in the midspace. Agni encircles thousands of cows.
6. It's Agni whom the clans stemming from Manu invoke; Agni (do) those born variously from Manu and from Nahus.
   Agni (has found) the Gandharvan path of truth; Agni's pasture-land is set down in ghee.
7. For Agni did the R̥bhus fashion their formulation; to Agni have we spoken a great, well-turned (hymn).
   O Agni, youngest one—further the singer; o Agni, win great wealth by sacrifice.

Two hymns (X.81–82) to Viśvakarman are attributed to the dedicand himself.

X.81 (907) Viśvakarman

Viśvakarman Bhauvana
7 verses: triṣṭubh

Viśvakarman, the "Maker of Everything" (or literally, "who has the making of everything"), is the carpenter (vs. 4ab) and smith (vs. 3cd) of creation, who fashioned the world. But he is also both an ancient seer (*ŕ̥ṣi*) and Hotar (vs. 1) and a present companion (vs. 5cd) and help (vs. 7) to the sacrificers, for his priestly work has continued from the ancient past into the present (vs. 1cd). This priestly work is closely connected with his creative work. He wins heaven and earth by a sacrifice that he carries out for his own sake (vs. 6ab), and his ritual work is dedicated to the benefit of the realms he surveys (vs. 5). In the first line the poet speaks of Viśvakarman's "pouring" beings "in oblation" (*júhvat*). It is not clear exactly what he means by that phrase, but it likely describes a process by which Viśvakarman sustains the living world through time or continues to make living beings his own.

The phrase must be significant, since the poet verbally recalls it in the last verse, when he anticipates that Viśvakarman will enjoy the "oblations" (*hávanāni*) offered to him. In 1c the description "seeking wealth with hope" refers to Viśvakarman's ritual activity, which carries the hope of prosperity for the sacrificer.

The first and last verses of the hymn create a frame for the hymn. In the first verse, Viśvakarman is both a seer (*ŕ̥ṣi*) of hymns and a Hotar, who pours oblations (*júhvat*). In the last he is the *vācás páti-* "Lord of Speech," who "will take pleasure in oblations (*hávanāni*)." That is, within the hymn, Viśvakarman begins as the model of a priest who both speaks and makes offerings, and concludes as the master of speech and the recipient of offerings, who supports the sacrificers. This movement from divine priest to priestly divinity exalts poets and priests, who are closely associated with him and whose words and deeds follow his.

One of the stylistic characteristics of the hymn is the echoing of Viśvakarman's name through the frequent use of *víśva* "every, all" (vss. 2d, 3ab, 7cd). Even more striking is the repeated use of words containing the *v*-sound also extracted from his name. Over a third of the words of the hymn contain that sound. Its repetition is especially obvious in 5cd *śíkṣā sákhibhyo havíṣi s**v**adhā**v**aḥ s**v**ayáṃ yajas**v**a tan**v**àṃ **v**r̥dhānáḥ* and 6ab ***víś**v**akarman* *havíṣā* ***v**ā**v**r̥dhānáḥ s**v**ayáṃ yajas**v**a pr̥thi**v**ī́m utá dyā́m*, two pādas that together have a string of twelve words containing *v*. The invocation to Viśvakarman and his presence thus persist even when his name is not explicitly mentioned.

1. The seer who took his place as Hotar, pouring all these living beings in oblation—our father,
   seeking wealth with hope, entered the later (generations while) concealing the first ones.
2. What was the resting place? Which one was providing support? How was it?—
   that from which Viśvakarman, producing the earth, (also) uncovered the heaven by his greatness—he who has his eyes on everything.
3. Whose eyes and face are turned in every direction, whose arms and feet move in every direction,
   producing heaven and earth, he forges them together with his arms, with his fan(-bellows)—he, the god alone.
4. What was the wood? What was the tree?—out of which they fashioned heaven and earth.
   O you of inspired thought [=priests], in your thinking ask about that upon which he rested, giving support to living beings.
5. What are your highest domains, what your lowest, and these that are your midmost, Viśvakarman—
   do your best for them for the sake of your companions at the oblation, o you of independent will. Increasing your own person, by yourself sacrifice for yourself.

6. O Viśvakarman, since you are increased through the oblation, by yourself win earth and heaven by sacrifice.
   Let the other peoples all around be left in confusion; for us here let there be a generous patron!
7. We would today summon the Lord of Speech, Viśvakarman, swift as thought, for help in the contest.
   He will take pleasure in every oblation of ours—he who is luck for everyone, whose work succeeds—to give us help.

X.82 (908) Viśvakarman

Viśvakarman Bhauvana
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn complements the preceding one and may be the more interesting of the two since it offers various hints about the various roles that Viśvakarman plays. The first words of the hymn, which call Viśvakarman the "father of the eye" (*cákṣuṣaḥ pitā́*), create the possibility of double reference. On the one hand, as Geldner and Renou (*EVP* XV: 170) rightly see and the subordinate clause "for he is insightful in mind" supports, the eye is the inspired vision of seers. On the other hand, the "eye" can be the eye of the sun, as frequently in the R̥gveda (e.g., I.164.14, V.40.8, 59.5, X.10.9). This double possibility is realized in the remainder of the verse, which describes both the sacrifice and the cosmos. In pāda b, the primary reference is to the sacrifice, evident in the ghee that the father produced. Because they are set in a sacrificial context, "the two that bob up and down" refer initially to the sacrificial ladles (*juhū́*), bending to the fire. But the two can also be heaven and earth, which rise and fall, a subsequent reading triggered by pāda d. In 1cd there is a shift to a cosmic context, which then becomes primary, and the sacrificial context is secondary. In 1c the phrase *ántāḥ*...*pū́rve* "ancient limits"—the beginnings of the world—can also mean the "eastern limits," the limits from which the sacrificial area is measured. The reference to "heaven and earth" in pāda d confirms the cosmic context of this hemistich but without excluding sacrificial reference, for on the sacrificial ground heaven is represented by the Āhavanīya or "offering fire" in the east and earth by the Gārhapatya or "domestic fire" in the west. (Though those terms, ubiquitous in middle Vedic śrauta literature, are not used in the R̥gveda of those two fires, the polarity of the two fires is clearly reflected in the R̥gveda.)

In verse 2a there is again an ambiguity: *iṣṭá* may mean what is offered in sacrifice or what is wished for, and here both meanings are possible. But whose are these "offerings" or "wishes"? The seers represented in the constellation of the Seven Seers (vs. 2b) are the closest and best possibilities. The frame of reference would then be the cosmos. Or those offering or wishing may be the "ancient seers," who

appear in verse 4. In that case the frame of reference is the sacrifice. That is to say, the first verses describe both the creation of the sacrifice and the creation of the world and thereby link the creation of the sacrifice to the creation of the world.

Whatever it is that Viśvakarman represents is central to these creations. He is initially set beyond both the sacrifice and the cosmos as the "father" of poetic vision and of the sun. But then in verse 2 he spreads throughout the sacrifice and the world. Verse 2ab puns on his name *Ví*śvakarman, repeating its first syllable by the prefix *vi-* in *vímanā* "vast in mind," *víhāyā* "vast in power," and *vidhātā́* "vast distributor"—the last, the one who distributes widely. The opposite of *vi-*, literally "apart," is *sam-* "together, completely," and the latter replaces *vi-* in 2bc in *saṃdṛ́ś* "full manifestation," a cosmic term, and *sám* √*mad* "fully invigorate," a sacrificial term. The lexical shifts create the sense that Viśvakarman first extends throughout the sacrifice and the cosmos and then condenses in a perceptible form.

In the latter part of the poem, in verses 5–7, the poet explores the manifest forms that Viśvakarman has taken. The best clue to the forms of Viśvakarman is the reference repeated in verses 5 and 6 to "the first embryo" that the waters received and in which all the gods were manifest and gathered. That first embryo can represent any or all of three realities. First, on the cosmic plane, it can be the sun, which rises out of the waters. Thus Viśvakarman would be initially the father of the sun and then, in manifest form, the sun itself. Second, on the sacrificial plane, the embryo can be fire, or more specificially the sacrificial fire, which is the "child of the waters" (*apā́ṃ nápāt*) and the form in which the presence of the gods at the sacrifice is manifested. And third, perhaps uniting cosmos and sacrifice, the embryo can be the king, who is reborn as the sun or as a sun-like being by means of the unction waters in the royal consecration rite. For a clearer reference to such imagery in the royal consecration rite, see X.121.

1. The father of the eye, for he is insightful in mind, gave birth to the ghee
   and the two that repeatedly bob up and down [=two ladles/heaven
   and earth].
   Only when the ancient [/eastern] limits were fixed, only then did heaven
   and earth spread out.
2. Viśvakarman is vast in mind and vast in power, the distributor—the vast
   distributor—and the highest full manifestation.
   Their offerings [/wishes] are fully invigorated by nourishment where,
   beyond the Seven Seers [=the Big Dipper], they say the one is.
3. To him who is our father and progenitor, who is the vast distributor, who
   knows the domains and living beings, all of them,
   who is the giver of names to the gods, the one alone—to him go the
   other living beings to make peace.
4. Like singers, the ancient seers together won for him wealth in abundance
   by sacrifice—
   they who together created these creatures after the airy realm, sunlit and
   unsunlit, took its seat.

5. Was it beyond heaven, beyond this earth, beyond lords and gods?
   What first embryo did the waters receive, where all the gods appeared together?
6. Just this first embryo did the waters receive, where all the gods gathered together:
   the one fitted upon the navel of the unborn, that upon which all living beings have taken their places.
7. You [=other priests] will not find him who gave birth to these things. For you another thing has come between.
   Covered by mist and muttering, feeding on life, they wander about, reciting their solemn speech.

The next two hymns are dedicated to Battle Fury (Manyú) and assigned to a poet whose name is transparently derived from the hymn itself, Manyu Tāpasa, or Battle Fury, son of Fervor (for Fervor, see 83.2d).

X.83 (909) Battle Fury

Manyu Tāpasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

This hymn begins with four verses praising Manyu for his might and victory-bringing qualities and entreating him to use these qualities against our enemies. The following three verses (5–7) strike a more personal note, with a 1st-person speaker, apparently deserted by Manyu for some undetermined reason. The speaker begs Manyu to return to his side, so that together they can smite the enemy.

1. Who has done honor to you, o Battle Fury—you mace, you missile—he prospers in due order in all victorious might and strength.
   Might we be victorious over Dāsa and Ārya with you as yokemate, with victorious might, created by might, possessing might.
2. Battle Fury was Indra, just Battle Fury was (every?) god; Battle Fury was the Hotar, Varuṇa, Jātavedas.
   Battle Fury do the clans that stem from Manu reverently invoke. Protect us, Battle Fury, in concert with Fervor.
3. Attack, Battle Fury, stronger than strong. With Fervor as yokemate smite away our rivals.
   Foe-smiting, obstacle-smiting, and Dasyu-smiting, bring all good things here to us.
4. For you, Battle Fury, having overwhelming strength, are self-generated Wrath, victorious over hostility.
   Common to all domains, victorious, possessing victorious might, confer strength on us in battle.

5. Being without a portion, I have gone off far away, because of your intention, you forceful and discerning one.
   Unintentionally I have angered you, Battle Fury. In your own person come to me to give me power.
6. Here I am—yours! Come right up here near to me face to face, o victorious one who suckles all.
   Battle Fury, mace-bearer; turn here toward me—we two shall smite the Dasyus—and be mindful of your friend.
7. Go forth on attack: be on my right side. Then we shall keep smiting obstacles in abundance.
   I offer to you the foundation and the top of the honey. We two shall both first drink silently.

X.84 (910) Battle Fury

Manyu Tāpasa
7 verses: triṣṭubh 1–3, jagatī 4–7

Like the last hymn, this one is a simple address to Manyu "Battle Fury" asking for his aid in our battles, as well as in the division of the spoils. Rhetorically the hymn is characterized by verbal chaining: almost every verse ends with a word picked up by the very beginning of the next verse. Thus, "fire" in 1d/2a, "alone" 3d/4a, "victory" 4d/5a, "ready to hand" 5d/6a, "pour in" 6d/7a; only 2d/3a lacks this concatenation.

1. Let them go forth on attack on the same chariot with you, o Battle Fury, you Marut-friend—doing damage, bristling with excitement, emboldened,
   possessing sharp arrows, having honed their weapons—the superior men with fire's form.
2. Flaring like fire, o Battle Fury, be victorious. Be our army-leader, victorious one, when you are invoked.
   On smiting our rivals, share out their possessions. Showing the measure of your strength, shove aside the scorners.
3. Vanquish hostility for us, Battle Fury. Breaking, crushing, crushing out, advance on our rivals.
   Formidable is your dimension: they have never confined it. Exerting your will, you lead at will, you who are born alone.
4. You alone are reverently invoked by many, Battle Fury. Hone every clan for battle.
   O one of unbroken brilliance, with you as yokemate we raise our heavenly cry for victory.

5. Creating victory like Indra, without talking us down, Battle Fury,
   become our overlord here.
   We hymn your dear name, victorious one. We know the wellspring
   whence you came to be ready to hand.
6. Born together with readiness, you mace, you missile, you bear highest
   victorious might, o overwhelming one.
   (Born?) together with your resolve, share the fat with us, Battle Fury, at
   the pouring in of great spoils, o much-invoked one.
7. The spoils, both those that have poured in and those that have been
   collected, let Battle Fury and Varuṇa give to us.
   Let our rivals, having set fear in their own hearts, defeated, hide
   themselves away.

With X.85 begins the series of individual hymns that will last to the end of the Xth Maṇḍala.

X.85 (911) Wedding

Sūryā Sāvitrī
47 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 14, 19–21, 23–24, 26, 36–37, 44; jagatī 18, 27, 43; urobr̥hatī 34

This first hymn of the single-hymn group, long and episodic, treats the domestic ritual of the wedding. Many of the verses are found also in the Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) wedding hymns (XIV.1–2) and are utilized in the gr̥hya sūtras (the protocols of the domestic rituals) in the wedding rite.

It begins (vss. 1–19) with a fairly coherent account of the wedding of Sūryā, the Daughter of the Sun, whose marriage serves as the prototype of human marriage. She is also named by the Anukramaṇī as the author of the hymn, a clearly fanciful ascription. The bridegroom is Soma, and the first five verses are devoted to asserting that this is not the familiar earthly soma, the ritual drink (see esp. vss. 3–4), but rather the celestial Soma—here identified for the first time as the moon, an identification that becomes standard later. The waning and waxing of the moon are referred to in verse 5, and probably cryptically in the first part of verse 4, in the puzzling adjective "those whose regulation is sheltering" (*āchádvidhāna*), using an idiom otherwise used for the regulation of the months and seasons (e.g., in vs. 18).

The next verses (6–12) employ a style familiar from the Atharvaveda and from middle Vedic prose, a structured series of identifications between cosmic and everyday entities; the everyday entities here are the different features of the wedding, and especially the wedding vehicle. Much in these verses is unclear for several reasons. For one thing, workaday language is seldom found in these high-culture texts, and

so the words for the members of the wedding party and the pieces of the bridal finery and wedding cart are unfamiliar. Moreover, the cosmic comparanda are difficult to penetrate as they seem to refer to unidentified astronomical bodies and movements. Verses 13–16 focus on a single episode in the marriage ritual, the "wooing." Judging from later practice, the bridegroom's party sends several males to the potential bride's home, to ask her father and other male members of the family for her as bride for the man they represent. This part of the ceremony begins with the wooers identifying themselves by name and lineage—the "pointing out" of verse 15. In this hymn the Aśvins are the wooers, arriving on their characteristic three-wheeled chariot, whose wheels provide the topic for a series of (presumably astronomical) riddles (vss. 15–16). (For further discussion see Jamison 1996a: 222–24.) After a verse of homage (17), this part of the hymn ends with two further verses of riddles about the sun and moon (18–19).

After this long, more-or-less self-contained mythological and cosmological opening the hymn continues with verses more appropriate to the current, human wedding. Verses 20–27 contain a somewhat jumbled treatment of the wedding, from the wooing to the arrival in the new home, beginning with an invitation to mount the wedding vehicle (vs. 20), perhaps placed here because it has connections with the Sūryā section. Verses 21–22 are addressed to a Gandharva (a type of lubricious demigod, thought to target unmarried girls), declaring the new wife off-limits. Verse 23 seems to collapse the earlier journey to the wooing and the journey to the new home, while the following two verses (24–25) concern the ceremony itself: at least in the later ritual the wife is briefly bound with a cord, as a symbolic initiation parallel to the initiation of a young Ārya boy. (See Jamison 1996a: 42–48.) Finally, in verses 26–27 we reach the journey to the new home and good wishes for the new mistress of the household.

Verses 28–35 are a strange, sinister, and menacing interlude between the generally happy tone of the first part of the hymn and the blessings with which it closes. These, especially verses 28–30 and 34–35, are also the most discussed and disputed verses in the hymn. Let us dispose of the relatively unproblematic verses 31–33 first. These concern the possible dangers of the wedding journey: diseases emanating from the spectators of the procession (vs. 31) and robbers and other hazards (vs. 32). In verse 33 the spectators are allowed to look at the bride and wish her good luck, but then ordered home.

It is generally agreed that the three preceding verses (28–30) have to do with the deflowering of the bride, though there is much disagreement about details. Verse 28, it seems, begins with the announcement of the blood-stained sheet or garment, the all-important sign that the bride was a virgin. But the rest of this verse and the two verses following do not treat this as an altogether positive outcome, especially for the groom. Because the bride was a virgin, the marriage is valid, so her relatives are pleased (28c)—but the new husband is trapped. The bride becomes a noose (like the old sexist American slang expression "ball-and-chain" for a wife), and he is bound in her bonds. She also becomes witchcraft embodied (28b, 29c). In our view

this refers to the unnerving and dangerous hold that sex, in the person of his wife, will exert over the husband. (Compare American English "that old black magic" for sexual attraction and desire.) He is not only legally but also mentally bound, and this hold is also expressed by the paradoxical "the wife enters her husband" at the end of verse 29. Though the sexual act of course happens the other way—husband enters wife—symbolically she enters him: she has penetrated his defenses, gotten "under his skin." The first half of verse 29 is unconnected with this emotional transformation; instead it simply continues the legal and social ramifications of the consummated marriage. With most commentators (*pace* Falk [1993], who thinks it is the sable pelt worn by the groom), we interpret the *śāmulyàm* of 29a as the stained garment of the bride, now to be disposed of. Pāda b treats the gifts to be given to the priests who officiated at the ceremony. In verse 30 we return to the groom's compromised physical and emotional state: sex, especially this first sex of marriage, is making him weakened and vulnerable, his naked flesh "glistening in an evil way," perhaps with sexual fluids. The theme of the garment found in literal terms in verses 28–29 acquires a somewhat shocking metaphorical twist in the second half of verse 30, where sexual intercourse is depicted as the husband dressing his penis in the "garment," that is, the body, of the bride.

After this emotional binge, the dangers of the road in verses 31–33 seem rather minor! (The journey verses may have been interpolated here because the diseases of vs. 31 are reminiscent of the groom's physical state in vs. 30.) But menace returns in verse 34, where an unidentified object is ascribed all sorts of harmful qualities. Only a brahmin can neutralize them. Similarly, in verse 35 various violent actions are depicted, which a brahmin can absolve. Most commentators have considered the object in verse 34 to be the stained garment of the bride, and the actions in verse 35 to have been performed on the garment to sanitize it. We think this unlikely; instead we consider these two verses to concern the wedding feast and in particular the cow killed for the feast. Just as the sex of verses 28–30 involved violence, surrender, and the breaking of taboos, so the slaughter of a cow to be eaten at the celebration requires the same ambivalently viewed actions and in a sense is a public representation of the private violation of deflowering. But brahmins who understand "Sūryā," that is, the nature of marriage, including its negative qualities, can safely eat the offered cow.

Verses 36–37 depict a far more benign husband than the tortured one of verses 28–30 and one more uncomplicatedly eager for sex. These verses lead into the famous series (38–41) about the previous, divine husbands of the wife. The final six verses (42–47) are simply expressed blessings of the married couple and of the new wife.

1. By reality is the earth propped up; by the sun is heaven propped up.
   By truth do the Ādityas stand, and Soma is fixed in heaven.
2. By Soma the Ādityas are strong; by truth is the earth great.
   And in the lap of these heavenly bodies Soma is set.

3. A man thinks he has drunk the soma when they crush the plant.
   But the Soma that the formulators know—no one at all consumes that.
4. Protected by those whose regulation is sheltering, guarded by those belonging to heights, o Soma,
   you just stay listening to the pressing stones. No earth-dweller consumes you.
5. When they take their first drink of you, god, after that you swell up again.
   Vāyu is the guardian of Soma. The moon is the model of the years.

6. Raibhī was (the female attendant) to be given along (with the bride), Nārāśaṃsī the in-dweller.
   Sūryā's auspicious garment goes adorned with a song.
7. Perception was the pillow, the eye was the adorning salve,
   Heaven and Earth were the bucket (seat), when Sūryā drove to her husband.
8. The praise songs were the crossbars, meter the veil and headdress.
   The Aśvins were the wooers of Sūryā and Agni was the leader.
9. Soma was the bridegroom; the Aśvins were both wooers,
   when Savitar gave Sūryā to her husband, as she pronounced (her vow) with her (whole) mind.
10. Mind was her wagon, and heaven was her canopy.
    The two glowing ones [=sun and moon] were the draft-oxen, when Sūryā drove to her (new) home.
11. Your two oxen, harnessed by verse and tune [/ṛc and sāman], went of one accord.
    The ear was your two wheels. The path to heaven meandered back and forth.
12. The two gleaming ones [=Heaven and Earth?] were your two wheels as you drove. Breath was hammered in as the axle.
    Sūryā mounted the wagon made of mind, as she went forth to her husband.
13. Sūryā's wedding proceeded, when Savitar set it going.
    In the Aghā's the cows are killed; in the two Arjunī's she is conveyed (to her new home).
14. When, o Aśvins, you two drove with a three-wheeled (chariot) to the wedding of Sūryā to ask for her,
    all the gods then gave assent to you two. The son Pūṣan chose you as his two fathers.
15. When you drove, you two lords of beauty, to Sūryā to woo her,
    where was your single wheel; where did you stand for the pointing out?
16. Your two wheels, o Sūryā—the brahmins know (them) according to their season.
    But the one wheel that is hidden—that just the experts know.

17. To Sūryā, to the gods, to Mitra and Varuṇa—
those who are forethoughtful of creation—to them I have made this obeisance here.
18. First in front, then behind, these two roam by their magic power. As two playful children, they travel around their ceremonial course.
The one [=Sun] watches over all creatures; the other [=Moon] is born again (and again) as he portions out the seasons.
19. He becomes ever new as he is born; as beacon of the days he goes at the forefront of the dawns.
He portions out their share to the gods as he comes here. The Moon extends his lifetime long.

20. Lovely with *kiṃśuka* flowers, (made of) *śalmali* wood, having all forms, of golden color, well-turning, well-wheeled—
mount, o Sūryā, the world of immortality. Make your wedding procession a comfortable place for your husband.
21. "Rise up from here, for this woman has a husband." I call on Viśvāvasu with reverence, with hymns.
"Seek some other girl sitting in (the house of) her father, adorned (for marriage) [/smeared (with menstrual blood)]. That is your share by nature. Know this."
22. "Rise up from here, Viśvāvasu." With reverence we invoke you.
"Seek some other burgeoning maiden. Send the wife to join with her husband."
23. Let the paths be straight and harmless to men, by which the comrades go to the wooing.
Aryaman and Bhaga should lead us all together. Let the united household be easy to hold fast, o gods.
24. I release you from the fetter of Varuṇa, with which well-disposed Savitar bound you.
In the womb of truth, in the world of the well-performed (sacrifice?) I place you unharmed along with your husband.
25. I release (her) from here, not from yonder. I have made her well bound yonder,
so that, o Indra the rewarder, this woman here will have good sons, good fortune.
26. Let Pūṣan lead you from here, having taken you by the hand. Let the Aśvins convey you forth in their chariot.
Go to the house, so that you will be mistress of the house. Exerting your will you will announce the ceremonial distribution.
27. Here let your heart's desire be realized through children; here in this house be vigilant for the ruling of your household.
With this husband merge your body. Then (even) as an elderly couple you two will announce the ceremonial distribution.

28. It [=bride's garment] becomes dark red. [She=bride] becomes witchcraft, a noose. She is smeared (with blood).
    Her relatives are elated; her husband is bound in bonds.
29. Hand over the stained garment; to the brahmins parcel out the goods.
    She herself has become walking witchcraft: the wife enters her husband.
30. His body loses its splendor—glistening in that evil way—
    when the husband is about to put on his own member the "garment" of the bride.

31. The diseases from the people that follow after the glittering wedding procession of the bride,
    those let the gods worthy of the sacrifice lead back again whence they came.
32. Let highwaymen who lie in wait not find the married couple.
    Let them cross over the hard place by easy roads. Let hostilities run away.
33. Of good omen is this bride here: together approach her, behold her.
    Having given good luck to her, then scatter away home.

34. This is rough; this is sharp, barbed, poisonous: it is not for eating.
    The brahmin who would know Sūryā, only he deserves this thing associated with the bride(groom).
35. Carving up, carving open, and then cutting apart:
    behold the forms of Sūryā! But the brahmin makes them clean.

36. I grasp your hand for good fortune, so that with me as your husband you will reach old age.
    Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar, Plenitude—(all) the gods—have given you to me for the ruling of the household.
37. Pūṣan, rouse her, most kindly disposed—(she) in whom humans scatter their seed,
    (she) who will willingly spread apart her thighs for us, (she) in whom we can willingly thrust our penis.
38. To you at first they conveyed Sūryā along with her wedding procession.
    Give the wife back to her husbands, Agni, along with progeny.
39. Agni has given the wife back, along with lifetime and luster, (to him)
    who as her husband will live, long-lived, through a hundred autumns.
40. Soma acquired (you) first; the Gandharva acquired (you) next.
    Agni was your third husband. The fourth was human-born.
41. Soma gave (her) to the Gandharva; the Gandharva gave (her) to Agni.
    Agni has given both wealth and sons to me, and also this woman here.

42. Stay just here, (you two); don't go apart. Attain your entire lifespan,
    playing with your sons and grandsons, rejoicing in your own house.

43. Let Prajāpati generate progeny for us. Let Aryaman anoint (you?) till old age.
    Without ill-omen enter the world of your husband. Be weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
44. Be free from the evil eye, not husband-smiting, kindly to the livestock, of good mind and good luster,
    hero-bearing, god-loving, comfortable. Be weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
45. Make this woman here, o Indra the rewarder, possessed of good sons and of good fortune.
    Confer ten sons on her: make her husband the eleventh.
46. Become sovereign queen over your father-in-law; become sovereign queen over your mother-in-law.
    Become sovereign queen over your sister-in-law, sovereign queen over your brothers-in-law.
47. Let all the gods jointly and jointly the waters anoint our two hearts.
    Together Mātariśvan, together the Disposer, together the Director—let them join us two together.

X.86 (912) Vr̥ṣākapi (Conversation of Vr̥ṣākapi Aindra, Indrāṇī, and Indra)

Indra (1, 8, 11–12, 14, 19–22), Indrāṇī (2–6, 9–10, 15–18), Vr̥ṣākapi Aindra (7, 13, 23) [per the Anukramaṇī]
23 verses: paṅkti

This dialogue hymn was called by Renou "the strangest poem in the R̥gveda" ("le poème le plus étrange du RV," 1956: 246). The three participants in the dialogue are Indra, his wife Indrāṇī, and his raffish monkey pal Vr̥ṣākapi, who is making sexual advances to Indrāṇī. The hymn contains startlingly explicit sexual discourse, as well as a dazzling array of apparent non-sequiturs, all embedded in an exaltation of Indra, signaled by its consistent refrain.

Not surprisingly its meaning and web of references have been the subject of much controversy; we cannot discuss the many conflicting interpretations here. However, in our opinion many of the puzzles can be solved if it is interpreted as an oblique treatment of the Aśvamedha (Horse Sacrifice) ritual, a royal ritual in which, according to the middle Vedic ritual texts, the chief queen copulates with the sacrificed horse to increase and magnify the power of the king, her husband. In this reading, the monkey represents the horse, with whom Indrāṇī must have sexual relations. She both indignantly rejects and also encourages Vr̥ṣākapi's advances in the course of the hymn, and after their ritual copulation she is called "wife of Vr̥ṣākapi" (vs. 13). The power of her husband Indra, the king, is extended by the

performance of this ritual, though he has been, in effect, cuckolded. Hence the paradoxical announcement in verse 17, which proclaims the sexual "loser" the real master. For a detailed discussion of the hymn in the context of the Aśvamedha, see Jamison (1996a: 74–88).

The hymn begins with Indra's complaint that he is no longer receiving honor or soma, a statement echoed by his wife (vss. 1–2). The falling off of ritual observance sets the stage for the performance of an Aśvamedha, for Indra to regain his position. The topic then shifts to Vṛṣākapi (vss. 3–6), whose friendship with Indra is clearly a bone of contention between the married couple. Indrāṇī reveals in annoyance that he has made advances to her, but then, in a startling descent into vulgar speech, boasts of her own sexual prowess (vs. 6). Vulgarity is matched by vulgarity in Vṛṣākapi's first entry into the conversation (vs. 7), where he responds to her implicit invitation. These two verses may well verbally signal the sexual activity between them, the climactic moment of interspecies pairing that mimics the Aśvamedha. The next two verses (8–9), presumably spoken by Indra and Indrāṇī, may well be a humorous reflection of this intercourse, which may appear to Indra as spectator more like vexation than pleasure.

In our view, the next two verses (10–11) are spoken by the narrator, proclaiming Indrāṇī's important new ritual status, as the queen ensuring the life and prosperity of her husband Indra. (The Anukramaṇī assigns them to Indra.) Indra then laments the loss of his friend (vs. 12), who is going to the gods as sacrificial offering, but rejoices in the renewed sacrificial offerings he himself is receiving (vss. 13–14). In these verses he addresses his wife both as Indrāṇī ("wife of Indra," vs. 12) and Vṛṣākapāyī ("wife of Vṛṣākapi," vs. 13), for by her copulation with the monkey she became his temporary ritual wife. The narrator affirms the renewal of soma offering to Indra in verse 15, rectifying the lapse in ritual attentions noted in verse 1.

The two responsive verses that follow (16–17) are the heart of the hymn and the best support for and justification of the Aśvamedha. The first contains what would be a universally accepted truism: the sexually successful male is the master and has the power. But this is trumped by the paradoxical reversal: the sexually successful male does not have the power; it's the unsuccessful one who is master. This statement is beautifully applicable to the Aśvamedha: the king is cuckolded by a horse (or, in this case, a monkey) and is witness to this humiliating act, but the king also receives all the benefit from the ritual, which increases his power, while the sexual partner of the queen is sacrificed.

With this pair of verses the hymn has reached its high point and conveyed its message. The remaining verses are something of a letdown. The next five (vss. 18–22) are an extended pun, relating the yearlong journey of the horse/monkey before the sacrifice with its journey to the gods after its sacrifice. The final puzzling verse (23) superficially has nothing to do with the rest of the hymn, but relates a miraculous birth from the daughter of Manu, who has the speaking name "Rib." The deeper connection must be the explosive fertility that the performance of the

Aśvamedha should confer on its participants. For discussion of this verse in an Indo-European context, see Watkins (2004).

The Aśvamedha is treated more directly in two hymns in Maṇḍala I, I.162 and 163.

1. [Indra:] "Because they have left off pressing (soma), they have stopped honoring Indra as god,
   (in the places) where my comrade Vr̥ṣākapi was getting high on the goodies of the stranger."
   – Above all Indra!
2. [Indrāṇī:] "But although, o Indra, you run away, beyond the wayward course of Vr̥ṣākapi,
   you do not find anywhere else for soma-drinking."
   – Above all Indra!
3. [Indra:] "What has this tawny beast Vr̥ṣākapi done to you—
   or to the thriving goods of the stranger—that you are jealous of him?"
   – Above all Indra!
4. [Indrāṇī:] "This dear Vr̥ṣākapi of yours that you protect, o Indra—
   the boar-hunting dog will snap at his ear."
   – Above all Indra!
5. [Indrāṇī:] "The monkey has spoiled my dear (well-)fashioned and decorated (private parts).
   I will break his head. I will not be easy-going for a bad actor."
   – Above all Indra!
6. [Indrāṇī:] "No woman has a better bottom than me or gives better sex.
   None is better at thrusting back than me, nor raises her thighs higher."
   – Above all Indra!
7. [Vr̥ṣākapi:] "Hey mama, you easy little lay, I get how it's, like, really gonna be.
   My bottom, mama, *my* thigh, *my* 'head' are gettin', like, excited."
   – Above all Indra!
8. [Indra:] "Why, o well-armed, well-fingered, broad-braided, broad-backsided one—
   why, o wife of a champion, do you vex our Vr̥ṣākapi?"
   – Above all Indra!
9. [Indrāṇī:] "This noxious creature has designs on me, as if I lacked a man [/hero].
   And I *have* a man [/hero]—with Indra as husband and the Maruts as companions."
   – Above all Indra!
10. Up till now the woman has (just) been accustomed to come down to the joint offering or to the festive gathering.
    Now she is magnified as the Adept of Truth, as one having a hero, with Indra as husband.
    – Above all Indra!

11. I have heard of Indrāṇī as (most) fortunate among these women.
for never, even in the future, will her husband die of old age.
– Above all Indra!
12. [Indra:] "O Indrāṇī, I find no pleasure without my comrade Vr̥ṣākapi,
whose own dear watery oblation goes here and now to the gods."
– Above all Indra!
13. [Indra:] "O wife of Vr̥ṣākapi [=Indrāṇī], rich, having good sons and daughters-in-law,
Indra will eat your oxen and the dear oblation that brings about whatever (you want)."
– Above all Indra!
14. [Indra:] "For they cook fifteen, twenty oxen at a time for me.
And I eat only the fat meat. They fill both my cheeks."
– Above all Indra!
15. Like a sharp-horned bull constantly roaring within the herd,
the "stirred" (soma libation), which the one desiring prosperity presses for you, is weal for your heart, o Indra.
– Above all Indra!
16. [Indra:] "He is not master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs.
He is master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down."
– Above all Indra!
17. [Indrāṇī:] "He is not master, for whose (penis) the hairy (vulva) gapes when it [=erect penis] has sat down.
He is master, whose penis hangs (limp) between his thighs."
– Above all Indra!
18. O Indra, this Vr̥ṣākapi found a slaughtered ass,
a knife, a basket, a new pot, and a wagon piled with firewood.
– Above all Indra!
19. [Vr̥ṣākapi:] "Here I go earnestly looking, distinguishing between Dāsa and Ārya.
(While) I drink (the offering) of the guileless presser, I kept looking for the wise."
– Above all Indra!
20. [Indra:] "Wasteland and chasm—how many yojanas (of distance) are they away (from here).
Vr̥ṣākapi, come home, to the nearer houses."
– Above all Indra!
21. [Indrāṇī:] "Come here again, Vr̥ṣākapi. We two will arrange easy passages (for you),
who, as sleep-destroyer [/-attainer], go home again (to death) along the path."
– Above all Indra!

22. When, o Vr̥ṣākapi, o Indra, you (all) went upward toward home,
    where was this beast of many misdeeds, to whom did the effacer of
      men go?
    – Above all Indra!
23. Manu's daughter, Parśu ("Rib") by name, gave birth to twenty at once.
    (Good) fortune indeed was there for her whose belly (labor-pain) vexed.
    – Above all Indra!

X.87 (913) Agni Demon-Smiter

Pāyu Bhāradvāja
25 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 22–25

A departure from the usual themes of Agni hymns (though quite reminiscent of the second half of I.36 and to a lesser extent X.118), this long hymn is entirely devoted to Agni as "demon-smiter" (*rakṣohán*), the first word of the hymn, and especially to his violent pursuit of "sorcerers" (*yātudhā́na*). The language is gleefully and creatively bloodthirsty, crediting Agni with a large arsenal of weapons, mostly based on the shape of his flames, and of means of violent destruction of the enemy (piercing, crushing, shattering, disemboweling, etc.). The vividness of the language is enhanced by the fact that, after the first verse, Agni is always addressed in the 2nd person and almost always with imperatives. (Only vss. 15 and 18 lack direct address to Agni, though he is lurking in the background. These two verses are also the only ones in which any other gods are allowed a part of the action.)

Agni's connection with ritual is barely mentioned in the hymn. In verse 1 the poet sprinkles him with ghee, addresses him, and kindles him, in order to ensure his protection, and in verse 4 it is made clear that the murderous power of Agni's weapons comes from the sacrifice and the associated ritual speech. That Agni's fierce and aggressive protection of us stems from our ritual behavior toward him should be kept in mind—though it must be admitted that the poet seems to forget this fact for long stretches of the hymn.

Lexical repetition and phonological figures, both simple and complex, are important features of the style of the hymn. To mention only one of the complex figures, the unusual participle *sphūrjáyan* "sizzling" (the only occurrence of this verb in the R̥gveda) in 11c is echoed phonologically by *śaphārújam* "hoof-breaking" in 12b (and to a lesser extent by *dhū́rvantam* "damaging" in 12d).

The sheer exuberance of the hymn is contagious, at least to its translators.

1. The demon-smiter—I besprinkle him as the prizewinner; I beseech him
     as Mitra [/an ally] for broadest shelter.
   Agni, sharpening himself, fully kindled according to (our) intentions—
     let him protect us from harm by day, let him by night.

2. Possessing jaws of metal, (first) brush the sorcerers with your flame, o Jātavedas, when fully kindled.
   (Then) with your tongue seize hold of those who have fools for gods. Having wrenched the flesh-eaters, stick them in your mouth.
3. You who have (teeth) in both, bring both jaws close together, the upper and the lower, as you sharpen (them), with murderous intent.
   Encircle (them) in the midspace, o king, and set upon the sorcerers altogether with your fangs.
4. Fitting your arrows to the bow with sacrifices, o Agni, and smearing their shafts along with their points with speech,
   with these pierce the sorcerers in the heart. Break their arms, turned against (us), in turn.
5. Agni, split the skin of the sorcerer. Let the murderous (arrow-)point smite him with its blaze.
   Cleave his joints, Jātavedas. When he is hewn apart, let the flesh-eater, craving his bloody flesh, open him up.
6. When now you see him standing still or moving about, o Agni Jātavedas,
   or flying along the paths in the midspace, as archer pierce him with your missile, sharpening it.
7. And, Jātavedas, with your spears recover what was seized, from the sorcerer who seized it.
   Constantly blazing in front, o Agni, smite him down. Let the mottled vultures that eat raw meat eat him.
8. Proclaim here, o Agni, whichever is the one who is the sorcerer who does this.
   Seize him with your firebrand, o youngest one. Make him subject to the eye of the one with his eye on men.
9. With your sharp eye, Agni, guard the sacrifice. Lead it forth to the east for the good (gods), o forethoughtful one.
   Let the sorcerers not deceive you, ever blazing against the demonic powers with your murderous intent, o you with your eye on men.
10. With your eye on men, look all over for the demonic among the clans. Shatter his three points.
    Agni, with your blaze cleave his ribs, and hew the root of the sorcerer into three parts.
11. Three times let the sorcerer who smites truth with untruth meet your onslaught, o Agni.
    Sizzling him with your flame, o Jātavedas, wrench him down for the singer before his very eyes.
12. O Agni, in the hoarse-voiced (singer) fix that eye with which you see the hoof-breaking sorcerer.
    Like an Atharvan fire-priest, with your divine light burn down the unobservant (sorcerer) who injures the true.

13. What today two opponents will utter as curses (at each another), o Agni, what harshness of speech those with hoarse voices will give birth to,
    what missile is born from the mind's fury, with that pierce the sorcerers in the heart.
14. Pound away the sorcerers with your heat; pound away the demonic with your blaze, o Agni.
    Pound away those who have fools for gods with your flame and away those who steal life, ever blazing against them.
15. Let the gods pound away the crooked man today, and let his harsh curses come back on him.
    Let their missiles reach the man thieving with speech at his vulnerable spot. Let the sorcerer meet the onslaught of every (god).
16. The sorcerer who anoints himself with the bloody flesh of men, who (does so) with horseflesh,
    who carries off the milk of the fertile cow—chop off their heads with your blaze, o Agni.
17. A year's worth of the milk of the ruddy cow: let the sorcerer not eat of that, o you with your eye on men.
    Whoever seeks to gorge himself on [/steal] the beestings, with your flame pierce him face-to-face in his vulnerable spot, o Agni.
18. Let the sorcerers drink cows' poison. Let those of evil ways be cut down before Aditi [/Innocence].
    Let the god Savitar hand them over. Let them be despoiled of their portion of plants.
19. From of old, Agni, you crush the sorcerers; demonic powers have never conquered you in battles.
    Burn up the flesh-eaters together with their roots [/with their fools (for gods)]. Let them not escape your divine lance.
20. Guard us from below and from above, Agni, from behind and from in front.
    Let these unaging, hottest (flames) of yours, ever blazing, burn against the man who speaks evil.
21. From behind, from in front, from below, and from above—as a poet with your poetic skill protect us all around, o king.
    O comrade, (protect) your comrade, as an unaging one (protect him to attain) old age. O Agni, as an immortal (protect) us who are mortal.
22. We would set you, the inspired poet, all around (us) as our fortress, o mighty Agni,
    displaying bold color every day, smiter of (the demonic powers) along with their wreckage—
23. With poison (smite) them along with their wreckage. Burn against the demons
    with your sharp flame, Agni, and with your spears with their scorching tips.

24. Burn against the pair of sorcerers, the two worm-eaters.
 I sharpen you, the undeceivable—awaken!—with my thoughts, o inspired poet.
25. Shatter his blaze with your blaze in all directions, o Agni.
 Break apart the strength of the demon sorcerer and his manliness.

X.88 (914) Sūrya and Vaiśvānara

Mūrdhanvant Āṅgirasa or Vāmadevya
19 verses: triṣṭubh

Two simultaneous superimpositions structure this hymn. On the one hand, the present-day sacrifice involving the establishment of the ritual fire and the pouring of oblations into it is contrasted with the primal production of the sacrificial fire by the gods. The present-day sacrifice begins (vs. 1ab) and ends (vs. 19) the hymn, and periodically surfaces throughout (vss. 3, 5, 14). However, the dominant strain is the primordial one, which begins in the second half of verse 1; the role of the gods in creating the original sacrifice and "begetting" the sacrificial fire is especially emphasized in verses 4 and the long sequence of 7–13, where the phrase "the gods begot" appears four times (vss. 8–10, 13), alongside similar expressions. This thematic strain is especially striking because the gods are also regularly identified as "worthy of the sacrifice" (vss. 3, 6, 11, 13; see also 5, where Agni is so called), that is, worthy of *receiving* the sacrifice, while they are in fact *performing* the sacrifice.

The other theme of superimposition is the identification of Agni, especially under the epithet Vaiśvānara "belonging to all men," with the sun. At first the sun's dependence on and complementarity with Agni is mentioned (vss. 1b, 2, 6): the sun only becomes visible and begins to shine when Agni is also visible. But the cosmos-filling radiance and heat of Agni (see vss. 3, 5, 7, 9) leads gradually to the premise that the gods created Agni *as* the sun, expressed clearly in verses 10–13. The poet then acknowledges Agni as the sun (vs. 14) and in enigmatic language describes the two paths between heaven and earth along which the sun / cosmic fire moves (vss. 15–16).

The last three verses (17–19) seem to provide a simultaneous transition from the cosmic and primordial elements in the superimposed structures to the present-day everyday—by way of a dialogue between two unnamed participants. Most interpreters (e.g., Geldner and Renou) identify the speakers as two priests, probably the Brahman and Hotar who are explicitly mentioned in the last pāda of the last verse (19d). But the words that introduce the speakers in verse 17, *ávara* and *pára*, are ambiguous. They can mean "nearer" and "farther" (referring to the positions of the priests on the sacrificial ground), but they can also mean "lower" and "upper" / "below" and "above," as derivatives of these words do in verse 14. In verse 17 they can therefore refer to cosmic elements. It is our view that in verse

17 the dialogue is first presented as a debate between Earth and Heaven (which appear at the end of vs. 15 as the defining poles of the cosmos) about their roles in sacrifice, but the dialogue participants unobtrusively become transformed into present-day priests.

The final verse anchors us firmly in the here-and-now of the sacrifice, but also asserts that as long as the morning fire will be kindled and the dawns will dawn, the sacrifice as we know it will be performed. This assertion may involve a bit of propaganda. The term *brāhmaṇá* as the technical designation of a priest appears in this verse; this term was only introduced in the late R̥gveda (as opposed to the earlier *brahmán* "formulator"), presumably as part of a codification and partial reorganization of the sacrificial system. The poet may then be claiming a long future for the new system, and implicitly suggesting its long history, stretching back to the origins of the world—cloaking a religious innovation in a garment of imagined tradition, as so often.

1. The oblation, the drink, unaging and delightful, has been poured into Agni, the one who finds the sun and touches heaven.
   For him to bear and support the world, the gods spread out (the world) by their autonomous power.
2. The world was swallowed and hidden away by darkness; (then) the sun became manifest when Agni was born.
   The gods, Earth and Heaven, and the waters and plants took pleasure in the fellowship of this one, of him.
3. Now urged on by the gods worthy of the sacrifice, I shall praise Agni, unaging and lofty,
   who with his radiance stretches through earth and this heaven, through the two world-halves and the midspace.
4. He who was the first Hotar, delightful to the gods, whom they anointed with melted butter upon choosing him (as priest),
   he made what flies and what goes (on foot), the still and the moving, to wax strong—Agni Jātavedas.
5. When, o Agni Jātavedas, you stood at the head of the world together with your light,
   we spurred you on with thoughts, songs, and recitations. You became worthy of the sacrifice as the one filling the two world-halves.
6. Agni becomes the head of the world by night; thence is the sun born, rising early in the morning.
   (Behold) this artful contrivance of those worthy of the sacrifice, that the swift one pursues his work, knowing the way.
7. He who shone brightly, beautiful to see in his greatness when fully kindled, the radiant one whose womb is in heaven—
   in him, in Agni did all the gods, the protectors of bodies, pour the oblation with well-spoken speech.

8. The gods first begot well-spoken speech, after that the fire [/Agni], after that the oblation.
   This became their sacrifice, the protector of bodies. That does Heaven know, that does Earth, that the waters.
9. The fire [/Agni] whom the gods begot, in whom all beings poured oblations,
   aiming straight, he heated earth and this heaven with his flame in his greatness.
10. For with a praise song, with their powers the gods begot in heaven the fire [/Agni] that fills the world-halves.
    And, for the sake of the world, they made him threefold. He ripens the plants of all forms.
11. When the gods worthy of the sacrifice set him in heaven as the Sun, the son of Aditi,
    when the wandering pair [=Sun and Moon?] came into existence, only after that did all living beings see in front of (them).
12. For the sake of the whole world the gods made Agni Vaiśvānara the beacon of the days.
    He who extends through the radiant dawns uncovers the darkness as he goes with his flame.
13. The gods, poets worthy of the sacrifice, begot unaging Agni Vaiśvānara,
    the primordial star, wandering but not confounding (the divine commandments), the mighty and lofty overseer of the wondrous apparition.
14. With mantras we address the poet Agni Vaiśvānara shining everywhere,
    the god who by his greatness encompasses the two wide (worlds) from below and from above.
15. I have heard from the forefathers that there are two routes, (that of) the gods and (that of) mortals.
    Along those two everything that moves goes together, whatever is between the father [=Heaven] and the mother [=Earth].
16. Conjoined, the two carry the one that wanders, born from the head, stroked by mind.
    He stands facing all beings: not keeping his distance, as, gleaming, he makes his transit.
17. When the lower [/nearer] one and the higher [/farther] one debate with each other, (they ask) "Of the two leaders of the sacrifice, which of us two knows it through and through?"
    Have our comrades been able to achieve joint revelry? Have they realized the sacrifice? Who can proclaim this here?
18. "How many fires are there and how many suns? How many dawns, and how many waters?
    O forefathers, I am not saying something two-faced to you: o poets, I am asking you in order to know."

19. For as long as the fine-feathered (mares [=flames?]) clothe themselves as
    if in the face of Dawn, o Mātariśvan,
    for that long the Brahmin establishes (the fire), approaching the
    sacrifice and taking his seat near to the Hotar.

X.89 (915) Indra

Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
18 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet's patronymic links him to the Viśvāmitra clan of the IIIrd Maṇḍala, and indeed the final verse (18) is the Viśvāmitra refrain, found in many of the Indra hymns of III (III.30.22, etc.). The penultimate verse (17d) mentions the Viśvāmitras, though that half-verse seems to have been borrowed from the Bharadvājas (VI.25.9). The poet appears to take his legacy quite seriously, for the hymn strikes one as self-consciously old-fashioned, a well-crafted Indo-Iranian praise poem, celebrating Indra's high cosmogonic deeds in carefully balanced rhetoric and beginning classically with the 1st-person subjunctive announcement "I shall praise Indra" (*índraṃ stavā*). The poet has also inherited the verbal cleverness appropriate to a proper ṛṣi: his similes and figures of speech are aptly deployed, and he knows how to mislead his audience and withhold information for surprise effect. This particular skill is clearest in verse 5, which appears to continue the praise of Indra, until we encounter as the first word of the second hemistich *sómaḥ*, the real subject of the verse.

In the second part of the hymn, beginning in verse 8, we encounter another theme dear to the Indo-Iranians: the punishment to be meted out to those who break or play false to their alliances or have no alliances at all. The word *mitrá* "alliance, ally, deified Alliance," alone or in compounds, appears seven times in verses 8–15, and is, of course, an element of the poet's ancestral name. Indra is repeatedly urged to punish the transgressors on behalf of the gods whose task is to maintain the proper relationships among men, namely Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman (see vss. 8–9). It is striking that, unlike in many Indra hymns, we don't simply call for Indra's aid in battle against whatever enemies oppose us; in this hymn our enemies are characterized as moral failures.

There is another way in which the poet appears to show his consciousness of his tradition—one that we might hesitantly call "intertextuality." In verse 14 the poet seems to be consciously citing, with some variation, the famous Indra-Vṛtra hymn I.32. He asks that after Indra's exercise of vengeance the enemies "will lie" in a certain way: *pṛthivyā́ āpṛ́g amuyā́ śáyante* "will lie there . . . in the (same) way (as) the embracer of the earth." It is difficult not to see this as a deliberate conflation of two famous phrases describing Vṛtra from I.32: 5d . . . *śayata upapṛ́k pṛthivyā́ḥ* "will lie as the embracer of the earth" and 8a . . . *amuyā́ śáyānam* "lying in that way." This quotation and conflation of phrases from a particular, and no

doubt well-known, poem seem quite different from the standard formulaic variation of our traditional poets, and it is perhaps not surprising to encounter it in the Xth Maṇḍala, as the practice of traditional poetic composition was drawing to a close.

1. I shall praise Indra, the most manly, who by his greatness forced apart the realms of light, apart the ends of the earth,
   who, maintaining their boundaries, filled (them) in their expanses, projecting beyond the rivers in his greatness.
2. (As) the sun (turns) around the wide expanses, Indra should cause to turn here, like chariot wheels,
   the one [=the sun?] that like a busy surge never stands still. He has smashed the black shades of darkness with his flaring.
3. Chant to him in the same old way a new sacred formulation that never turns away, without equal on earth and in heaven—
   to Indra, who has distinguished the races of the stranger, like the (straight and crooked) backs (of horses), and need not seek (further for) a comrade.
4. For Indra I have raised my songs, (like) waters in restless surges from the depths of the sea,
   for him who propped asunder earth and heaven with his powers, like wheels with an axle.
5. He who provides battle fury in his drink, whose first impression is sharp, the boisterous, vehement one with his arrows, who possesses the silvery drink—
   Soma! All the bushes and trees have not deceived Indra as near-equivalents (of soma).
6. (To him [=Indra]), of whom neither heaven and earth, nor the dry land, nor the midspace, nor the mountains (are the equal), soma has flowed.
   When his battle fury is being drawn forth, he cleaves the hard and shatters the firm.
7. He smote Vr̥tra, like an axe the trees. He shattered the fortresses. He dug channels as if for rivers.
   He split the mountain, just like a new pot. Together with his own yokemates, Indra made the cows his own.
8. It's just you, Indra, who are the insightful requiter of debts. As a knife does joints, you cleave the crooked (ways of those)
   who violate the ordinances of Mitra and Varuṇa, as people violate a bound alliance.
9. Those of evil ways who transgress against Mitra [/an alliance] and against Aryaman, against agreements and against Varuṇa—
   grind your bulging bullish ruddy weapon of death down on those without alliance (to us), o bullish Indra.

10. Indra is master of heaven and Indra of earth, Indra of the waters and Indra of the mountains,
 Indra of the strong and Indra of the wise; Indra is to be called upon in peace and Indra in war.
11. Indra, the strong, projects beyond the nights and beyond the days, beyond the midspace and beyond the wellspring of the sea,
 beyond the spreading of the wind and beyond the end of the earth, beyond the rivers and beyond the settlements.
12. Like the beacon of the ever-blazing dawn, let your insatiable missile go rolling forth, Indra.
 Like a stone being launched from heaven, pierce with your hottest weapon those whose alliances are deceitful.
13. The months gave way to (him), the trees gave way, the plants gave way, the mountains gave way;
 the two world-halves eagerly gave way to Indra; the waters gave way to him as he was being born.
14. When will vengeance be yours, Indra, such that you will rend the demonic power of the evil one, which besets (us),
 and that those who bloody their allies will lie there like cows at slaughter, in the same way as (Vr̥tra), embracer of the earth?
15. Those who, seeking to rival us, have battered at us, being greatly arrogant and powerful, o Indra—
 let those without alliance (to us) keep company with blind darkness. The nights with their good lights should prevail over them.
16. Because the many soma-pressings of the peoples and the sacred formulations of the singing seers exhilarate you,
 heeding this common call, with your help drive nearby, across all (others) as they chant.
17. In just this way, Indra, might we know your new favors that bring benefits.
 And with your help, Indra, might we Viśvāmitras know this, as we sing just now at dawn.
18. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
 the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

X.90 (916) Puruṣa

Nārāyaṇa
16 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 16

This is one of the best-known and most influential hymns of the R̥gveda. Its central symbol is the *púruṣa*, the “man,” “person,” or “human being.” On the surface, this

hymn tells of the sacrifice of a giant man, from whose parts the world was created. The theme of creation through a cosmic sacrifice is widespread, but this hymn is not simply the retelling of an ancient tradition. The *púruṣa* here serves as a symbol of the sacrifice itself, which especially in the middle Vedic tradition is a locus of creative power. The *púruṣa* is thus similar to the later divine figure Prajāpati, who in the Brāhmaṇas personifies the sacrifice. Indeed this late hymn represents a verse commentary on the sacrifice that prefigures the prose commentaries of the Brāhmaṇas. This hymn is also notable because it is the only R̥gvedic mention of the four varṇas, the hierarchical division of the social order that forms the theoretical basis for the caste system. One reason that the hymn may have been included in the R̥gveda to provide a R̥gvedic charter for such a division of society.

The identity of the Man and the sacrifice is established in the opening verse, for his thousand heads, eyes, and feet recall Agni, the sacrificial fire, and his macrocosmic equivalent, the Sun (cf. Brown 1931: 109–10). The Man comprehends the earth and extends beyond it. As Mus (1968: 549) has pointed out, the "ten-fingers' breadth" by which he exceeds the world measures from the Man's hairline to his mouth. The Man's mouth represents speech, which marks the boundary between the imperceptible world of thought and the perceptible world created by speech. His mouth is also associated with eating, and in verse 2 the Man rises beyond the world "through food," that is, by making the world his food. In later texts the "eater" is the master and the "eaten" is one who benefits the master (cf. Rau 1957: 34–35). The image may therefore reflect the Man's dominance over the world. See also X.125, in which the mouth is similarly both the locus of speech and the locus of eating.

This theme of dominance or rule continues also in verse 5 in the mutual generation of the Man and the Virāj. The word *virā́j* can mean either "brilliant" or "ruling, rule." The latter is the more likely sense here, and therefore this word connects the hymn to Vedic ideals of the king, who in his consecration encompasses the world in a similar way that the Man does here (Proferes 2007: esp. ch. 3). Since the term *virā́j* is grammatically feminine, it complements *púruṣa*, which is masculine in grammar and connotation.

The Man is the "offering" (vs. 6), the sacrificial victim (vs. 15), but more especially he is the sacrifice itself that the gods, the Sādhyas, and seers performed (vs. 7). Through this sacrifice the elements of subsequent sacrifices emerged: the "clotted-mixture" (vs. 8), the verses, chants, meters, and sacrificial formulae (vs. 9), and the sacrificial animals (vs. 10). The parts of the sacrifice also became the three upper varṇas (vss. 11–12): his mouth the brahmins, masters of knowledge and speech; his arms the rulers, the possessors of power; and his thighs the freemen or clansmen, who are the productive support of society. These three classes form parts of the sacrifice because they can participate in the sacrifice. The śūdras or "servants" are not part of the sacrifice but rather emerge from the feet of the Man, a symbol of their low social status and their exclusion from the sacrifice. Finally, the elements of the cosmos and gods themselves come forth from the sacrifice (vss. 13–14). This primeval sacrifice thus establishes the "first foundations" for the performance of the

sacrifice or even for the ritual, social, divine, and visible worlds more generally (vs. 16ab), and it creates access to heaven (16cd).

The identity of the Sādhyas (in vss. 7 and 16) is not clear. Their name means "those to be brought to success," and they appear to be ancient sacrificers whose proper ritual performance has "perfected" them and who have attained god-like status or the status of gods.

1. The Man has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet.
   Having covered the earth on all sides, he extended ten fingers' breadth beyond.
2. The Man alone is this whole (world): what has come into being and what is to be.
   Moreover, he is master of immortality when he climbs beyond (this world) through food.
3. So much is his greatness, but the Man is more than this:
   a quarter of him is all living beings; three quarters are the immortal in heaven.
4. With his three quarters the Man went upward, but a quarter of him came to be here again.
   From there he strode out in different directions toward what eats and what does not eat.
5. From him the Virāj was born; from the Virāj the Man.
   Upon his birth, he reached beyond the earth from behind and also from in front.
6. When, with the Man as the offering, the gods extended the sacrifice,
   spring was its melted butter, summer its firewood, autumn its offering.
7. On the ritual grass they consecrated that sacrifice, the Man, born at the beginning.
   With him the gods sacrificed, (also) the Sādhyas and those who were seers.
8. From that sacrifice, when it was offered in full, the clotted-butter mixture was collected.
   It [=the sacrifice] was made into the animals: those of the air (and both) those that belong to the wilderness and those that belong to the village.
9. From this sacrifice, when it was offered in full, the verses and chants were born.
   Meters were born from it. The sacrificial formula—from it that was born.
10. From it horses were born and whatever animals have teeth in both jaws.
    Cows were born from it. From it were born goats and sheep.
11. When they apportioned the Man, into how many parts did they arrange him?
    What was his mouth? What his two arms? What are said to be his two thighs, his two feet?

12. The brahmin was his mouth. The ruler was made his two arms.
    As to his thighs—that is what the freeman was. From his two feet the servant was born.
13. The moon was born from his mind. From his eye the sun was born.
    From his mouth Indra and Agni, from his breath Vāyu was born.
14. From his navel was the midspace. From his head the heaven developed.
    From his two feet the earth, and the directions from his ear. Thus they arranged the worlds.
15. Its enclosing sticks were seven; the kindling sticks were made three times seven,
    when the gods, extending the sacrifice, bound the Man as the (sacrificial) animal.
16. With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice for themselves: these were the first foundations.
    These, its greatness, accompanied (it) to heaven's vault, where the ancient Sādhyas and the gods are.

X.91 (917) Agni

Aruṇa Vaitahavya
15 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 15

This hymn is reminiscent of X.89 in style: a well-crafted, self-consciously rhetorical praise of the god utilizing standard tropes and traditional images. The poet of this hymn is especially fond of etymological figures (especially in the first few verses) and chaining between verses (note, e.g., vss. 8d/9a, 10/11).

The hymn covers many familiar themes, contrasting the physical fire (e.g., vss. 5–7) with the deified fire and his ritual roles, but it is the latter aspect of Agni that is dominant.

1. Awakening, he is kindled by the wakeful ones, the household master in the house, becoming refreshed in the footprint of refreshment,
   the Hotar of every oblation, worthy to be chosen, far-ranging, far-radiant, a good comrade to one who acts as comrade.
2. He, with beauty lovely to see, a guest in every house—in every (piece of) wood he is set like (a bird) of swooping pursuit in the woods.
   Belonging to the people, he does not overlook any people. Belonging to the clan, he dwells among the clans—each and every clan.
3. Very skillful through your skills, through your will you are strong-willed. O Agni, you are the all-knowing poet through your poetic craft.
   As good one, you alone hold sway over goods, which both Heaven and Earth foster.

4. Foresightful, o Agni, you have settled down seasonably to your ghee-rich womb, in the footprint of refreshment.
   Your arrivals show brightly like those of the dawns, your reins spotless like the rays of the sun.
5. Your beauties, brilliant like the lightning flashes of a rain-bearing (cloud), show brightly like the beacons of the dawns,
   when, set loose toward the plants and woods, you encompass them yourself as food in your mouth.
6. The plants conceived him as their embryo at the proper season; the waters as his mothers begot this Agni.
   Both the woody (plants) and the sprouts (become) pregnant and give birth to him who is just the same everywhere.
7. When whipped up by the wind, aroused, you spread yourself out, constantly worrying the dry food at will,
   your unaging troops [=flames] take up their places separately like charioteers, as you go burning, Agni.
8. Creator of wisdom, furtherer of the rite, Agni, the Hotar, best encompassing thought,
   just him at the small oblation, just the same for the great one—just him they choose—no other than you.
9. Just you do they choose here—the ritual adepts devoted to you—as Hotar at the rites, o Agni,
   when seeking the gods they provide pleasurable offerings for you—the men with their oblations, with their twisted ritual grass.
10. Yours, Agni, is the office of Hotar; yours that of Potar in its turn; yours that of Neṣṭar; you are the Agnidh [=fire-kindler] of the one who follows truth.
    Yours is the office of Praśāstar; you act as Adhvaryu; you are both the Brahman-priest and the Houselord in our home.
11. The mortal who for you, the immortal, o Agni, will perform pious work with the kindling stick or by the preparation of the oblation,
    for him you become the Hotar; his mission do you undertake. You speak on his behalf; you perform sacrifice, you act as Adhvaryu for him.
12. These here—the thoughts, speeches, verses, songs, and good praises from us—have come together for him,
    for Jātavedas the good one—goods-seeking (praises) in which he will take pleasure as their strengthener, though they are (already) strong.
13. I would proclaim this good praise here, a newer one, to him, the age-old, who is eager for it: let him hear us.
    May it come very close, to touch his heart, like an eager wife, richly dressed, to her husband.

14. (For him) into whom horses, bulls, oxen, mated cows, rams, once released, are poured out [=offered],
    for the *kīlāla*-drinker who has soma on his back, for the ritual adept I generate with my heart a pleasing thought—for Agni.
15. An oblation has been poured into your mouth, Agni, like ghee into a ladle, like soma into a cup.
    Place in us prize-gaining wealth, rich in heroes, celebrated, glorious, lofty.

X.92 (918) All Gods

Śāryāta Mānava
15 verses: jagatī

A generally disorganized and often puzzling hymn, it nonetheless begins with three well-turned verses to Agni, using some of the same lexicon and imagery as the preceding Agni hymn. This initial similarity may account for the placement of the hymn in the maṇḍala. Two Agni verses also close the hymn (14–15) in a ritual context.

What lies between seems to lack structure and logical progression. Some verses contain an odd assortment of divinities and semi-divinities (e.g., vss. 4–5, 11–13); Rudra and/or the Maruts recur in several verses (5–6, 9). Fragments of familiar myths appear without further development—for example, Indra's interference with the horses of the Sun in verse 8—and other verses contain apparent references to other stories of which we know nothing (e.g., vs. 10). In short, despite some pleasing passages, the hymn mostly yields frustration.

1. (I invoke) for you the charioteer of the sacrifice, the clanlord of clans, the Hotar, the guest by night, rich in radiance.
   Blazing in the dry (sticks), flickering in the golden (plants), the bullish beacon, worthy of the sacrifice, has reached heaven.
2. This one here, who drinks directly, have both (sides [=gods and men]) made their own: Agni the supporter, the furtherer of the rite.
   The dawns kiss the youthfully exuberant one like the night, the one set in front, the descendant of himself, of ruddy (fire).
3. Yes indeed! we discriminate between his counsels and those of a niggard. Twigs have been bepoured for his eating.
   When the fearsome ones [=Aṅgirases] reached immortality, just after that did they pay tribute to the divine race.
4. For heaven, the broad expanse, is the trajectory of truth. (There there is) Reverence and great Devotion, the very admirable.
   (There) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa perceive with like mind, and Bhaga and Savitar—(all) possessing refined skill.

5. The rivers go forth with the journeying Rudra; across great Devotion they have run—
   those with which the earth-circling one [=Parjanya?], going around the broad expanse, constantly rumbling in his belly, besprinkles everything.
6. Busy are the Rudras, the Maruts belonging to all communities, the falcons of heaven, nestlings of the lord.
   Through them Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman make their observations, and Indra hastening with the hastening gods.
7. Having labored to exhaustion, they have obtained their benefit in Indra, in the sight of the sun, and in the masculine nature of the bull—
   the bards [=Aṅgirases?] who fashioned as his due the mace, his yokemate, at the sessions [=sacrifices] of men.
8. He [=Indra] brought to a halt even the golden (horses) of the Sun, his very own. Anyone feels fear before Indra the stronger,
   before the snorting from the belly of the fearsome bull. Day after day the victorious one thunders, unrepellable.
9. With reverence show forth your praise today to Rudra the skillful, who rules over heroes,
   (and to those [=Maruts]) with whom he, the well-disposed, very helpful, self-glorious one, keeps company—with those of heaven who travel their ways, the avid ones.
10. Because they disseminated their fame to their progeny—Bṛhaspati, the bull, and those akin to Soma—
    the first Atharvan (priest) distributed it through sacrifices. The gods and the Bhṛgus perceive with like mind through their skills.
11. For Heaven and Earth of abundant seed, Narāśaṃsa, the four-square, Yama, Aditi,
    god Tvaṣṭar, treasure-giver, the masters of the Ṛbhus, Rodasī [/the two World-Halves], the Maruts, Viṣṇu are deserving.
12. And of us, the fire-priests, our sage poet [=Agni?] (is) widely (perceptible). Let Ahi Budhnya listen to his call;
    let Sun and Moon, the heaven dwellers wandering separately. O you two Nahuṣī [=Manu and Nahus?], through visionary thought and ritual labor take cognizance of this one.
13. Let Pūṣan, belonging to the All Gods, let the Child of the Waters, let Vāyu help us forward to seek our movable (goods=livestock).
    Chant to Vāta, the lifebreath, all the more. O Aśvins, easy to invoke, hear this on your journey.
14. Him who presides over these fearless clans, the self-glorious one, we hymn with hymns;
    Aditi without assault, along with all the Wives (of the Gods), and the youthful lord of the night (do I?), the manly minded, (hymn).

15. Here crackles the foremost Aṅgiras [=Agni] from birth. The pressing stones, aloft, look upon the ceremony,
(those stones) by which the wide-gazing (soma) became widely extended. The (livestock) pen is well-grounded, the axe in the wooden (tree).

X.93 (919) All Gods

Tānva Pārtha
15 verses: prastārapaṅkti, except anuṣṭubh 2–3, 13, paṅkti? 9, nyaṅkusāriṇī 11, purastādbṛhatī 15 [per Anukramaṇī]

Even more so than the previous hymn, X.92, this hymn to the All Gods poses more challenges to the interpreter than it yields rewards. This opinion seems to be almost universally shared (see, e.g., Geldner, Renou, Gonda [1975: 212]), and it is generally agreed that some of the problems may be due to faulty transmission.

The poem is composed in a variety of meters, with verses of mixed twelve/eleven- and eight-syllable pādas, at least in principle—though often these pādas do not conform, by syllable count, caesura, or cadence quantities, to their models. (On the meter see Oldenberg 1888: 101, 117.) The syntax of the hymn is also quite sketchy, with many verbs missing and with nominal forms often apparently merely juxtaposed rather than being linked by normal case relations, and the identity of the referents in many verses is obscure.

The reasons for the choice of the gods honored and their sequence are also not clear. The hymn begins with a verse to Heaven and Earth, who recur in verse 10. Verses 2–3 treat the gods in general, while verse 4 begins to name names, starting with the Ādityas. The next three verses (5–7) form a relatively well-organized unit, with a focus on the Aśvins and a shared opening (*utá naḥ* "and us"). The end of verse 7 provides a transition to verse 8, with the Ṛbhus and their master, Indra, who also appears in verses 9 and 11. The poet summarizes his poem in verse 12 (with more pride than we would perhaps allow him). Verses 13–15 constitute a dānastuti, mentioning a number of patrons. Note that the name that the Anukramaṇī supplies for the poet has simply been extracted from the name(s) of one or more patrons in verse 15.

1. Become greatly wide, o Heaven and Earth; the two world-halves are always like exuberant young women for us.
With these (gods?) protect us from one more powerful; with them protect us when (he is) swollen with strength.
2. At every sacrifice that mortal honors the gods
who, of longest fame, seeks to entice them here with benevolent thoughts.

3. O you who have control over them all, the shield of the gods is mighty,
for they all possess all might; all are worthy of the sacrifice at the sacrifices.
4. The kings of immortality are gladdening: Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, and the Earth-Encircler [=Wind?]—
and what about Rudra praised of men?—the Maruts, Pūṣan, Bhaga.
5. And for us by night (and by day), o you two of bullish goods [=Aśvins], the Sun and Moon are our joint guides toward the seat of the waters,
when in company with them Ahi Budhnya [/the Serpent of the Deep] has been set in the depths.
6. And for us let the two gods, the Aśvins, lords of beauty, let Mitra and Varuṇa make broad space through their domains.
He hastens toward great riches, across difficulties as if across wastelands.
7. And to us let the Aśvins, though Rudras, be merciful—and all the gods, the Lord of the Chariot, Bhaga,
R̥bhu, Vāja, o Masters of the R̥bhus, the Earth-Encircler, o you who afford all possessions.
8. Craftsmanly is the Master of the R̥bhus [=Indra]; craftsmanly is the exhilarating drink of the one who does honor—(let) your two prizewinning fallow bays (come) hither, as you speed—
of the one whose melody is also difficult to surpass, (whose) separate sacrifice is like (a sacrifice) stemming from Manu.
9. Make for us immoderation (of wealth), god Savitar. I will praise (you?) in company with our patrons.
Along with his draft-horses, Indra keeps hitching up (wealth) for these (patrons) of ours and keeps hold of "the wheel of the domains" like a rein.
10. On them, o Heaven and Earth, confer great fame reaching to all domains, and on the heroes among us,
(and confer) strengthening nourishment for the winning of the prize, strengthening nourishment for victory through wealth.
11. O Indra, inclined toward us, (come?) to this laudation, wherever it may be, for our dominance, mighty one.
Always protect (us) for our dominance. Let our acquisition fatten, o good one.
12. This praise of mine for the superior men, the praise whose course is dazzling as if by its stretching to the sun, they have strengthened,
as a carpenter strengthens a horse-"conciliator" [=piece of horse tack?], (so) it cannot be budged.
13. They whose (priestly gift) comes rolling, their (priestly gift) is golden, yoked with wealth—
(it is) like manly forces when facing the other side, like one whose ends have been accomplished [?] at will.

14. I proclaim this in front of Duḥśīma, Pr̥thavāna, Vena, in front of Rāma the lordly, in front of the patrons
who, having yoked five hundred, (sent) them along the path, destined for us, (so that) their (priestly gift) has become widely famed.
15. In addition here and now seven and seventy
at once did Tānva assign (to us), at once did Pārthya assign, at once did Māyava assign.

X.94 (920) Pressing Stones

The snake Arbuda Kādraveya
14 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5, 7, 14

This second hymn to the pressing stones (for the relations among the three pressing-stone hymns, see the introduction to X.76) is a playful and imaginative praise of these implements for extracting the soma juice from the plant. The stones are animatized throughout—as human workers, as hungry bulls, as birds, as antelopes, as horses. But there is special emphasis on them as speakers. The first four verses begin with "speaking" verbs (and often continue with them), with a variant phrase beginning verse 5, and the last two verses (13–14) echo these verbs. These last two verses treat the unhitching of the stones, their task completed, and the last pāda of verse 14 rather poignantly not only releases them but de-animatizes them: they are now perceived as just stones.

1. Let them speak forth; let us speak forth. Speak a speech to the pressing stones that are speaking,
when, o stones, o mountains, all together you swift ones possessed of soma bear your signal-call, your cry to Indra.
2. They speak as if in hundreds, in thousands. They roar with their golden mouths.
Having toiled at their good work, the good workers, the stones, have achieved the eating of the oblation even before the Hotar.
3. They speak; in this way they found the honey. They growl over the cooked flesh.
Gnawing at the branch of the reddish tree, the gluttonous bulls have bellowed out to it.
4. They speak loftily by reason of the delighting delightful (soma). Shrieking to Indra, in this way they found the honey.
(Fit) to be clasped by the sisters [=fingers], the clever ones have danced, making the earth heed with their trampling.
5. The eagles have raised their speech up to heaven. In their lair the black antelopes have danced vigorously.

Down they go downward to the rendezvous with the lower one. They have themselves produced much semen from the sun-bright one.

6. Like powerful draft(-horses), they have held fast, yoked together, the bulls bearing the chariot-poles.
   When panting and gulping they have bellowed, their snorting sounds like that of chargers.
7. To those who possess ten tracks, ten girthbands, ten yoking cords, ten yokes,
   ten reins—sing to the unaging ones pulling ten chariot-poles, ten yoked ones [=fingers?].
8. These swift stones have ten fastening straps. Their delightful harness encircles (them).
   They have taken as their share the beestings of the pressed somian stalk of the first plant.
9. The soma-eaters kiss the two fallow bays of Indra. Milking the plant, they sit on the cow(hide).
   Having drunk the somian honey milked by them, Indra grows strong, spreads out, plays the bull.
10. Your plant is a bull. You will certainly not suffer harm. You are always possessed of nourishment, (well-)fed.
    You are pleasing to him whose ceremony you have enjoyed because of your grandeur, as if because of a richly endowed (daughter, given to him in marriage?), o pressing stones.
11. Drilled or undrilled, you stones are unwearying, unslackened, immortal,
    unailing, unaging, unbudgeable, very stout, unthirsty, unthirsting.
12. Firmly fixed are your fathers [=mountains] in every age. Desirous of repose, they do not hitch themselves up from their seat.
    Undecaying, companions of the golden (soma), (like) golden trees, they have made Heaven and Earth listen by their bellowing.
13. Just so do the stones speak at their unhitching, *or on their course they speak with their tramplings—the stones as they drink (the soma) directly.
    Like grain-producers [=farmers/millstones] strewing seed, strewing their “seed” [=semen] they engorge the soma. They do not diminish him though they gnaw at him.
14. When (the soma) was pressed in the ceremony they raised their voice, like playful (boys) jostling their mother.
    Unhitch (the stones) that have pressed it and release the inspired thought of the (priest) who has pressed it. Let them roll away, being (now) perceived as (just) stones [/the stones no longer being held in harness].

X.95 (921) Purūravas and Urvaśī

Dialogue between Purūravas Aiḍa and Urvaśī
18 verses: triṣṭubh

This very famous and much-discussed hymn contains the dialogue between the Apsaras Urvaśī and her discarded mortal husband Purūravas. He accosts her on her journey (presumably back to her fellow Apsarases) and demands that they discuss what went wrong with their marriage (vs. 1). He reminisces about her beauty (vs. 3) and her good wifely ways (vs. 4), while she impatiently dismisses him (vs. 2) and provides her own view of her service as wife (vs. 5). The next verses (6–11) primarily concern the crowd of Apsarases who attended Urvaśī when she gave birth to her and Purūravas's son Āyu. Purūravas evinces some jealousy about (as well as some physical attraction to) these females with whom he competed for Urvaśī's attention and to whom she is returning, while Urvaśī here implies that Purūravas should have his mind on more manly matters than love, such as military protection (esp. vss. 7 and 11; see also the ironic vocative "hero" in 5).

Urvaśī attempts to dismiss Purūravas again (vs. 11). He tries another tack to keep her from leaving: how can she separate him from his loving son (vs. 12)—to which she briskly replies that she'll send him the kid, chillingly referred to in the neuter, back to him (vs. 12). The second half of this verse forms a ring with the second half of verse 2, her first speech: she seems thus to be trying to bring the conversation to a close. But Purūravas raises the stakes: with masterfully expressed self-pity he then suggests that he may disappear or die (and won't she be sorry then…?, vs. 14). Urvaśī wearily talks him out of it (vss. 15–16). He tries one more time (vs. 17), using a grander and more solemn linguistic register. The hymn ends with a somewhat enigmatic summary verse (18) containing the gods' address to Purūravas at the end of this affair. Because Purūravas's connection with the immortal Apsaras (note that Apsarases are called "immortal" in vs. 9) was severed and his son was returned to him, the mortal, he is bound to death, and his offspring will relate to the gods as mortals do, by sacrifice. But he will nonetheless later receive a joyous afterlife in heaven. (It is noteworthy that this is the only occurrence of the word *svargá* "heaven" in the R̥gveda.)

One of the many extraordinary features of this brief masterpiece is the way it replicates the shifting emotional logic, the abrupt changes of tone and subject, and the twisting of the other's words characteristic of a genuine marital quarrel of whatever era and culture, while presenting us with pictures of great beauty, however difficult the language is to interpret in many places. It is also uncompromising in its depiction of a resolute and hard-hearted female, unmoved by the abject pleas and emotional blackmail of her former lover who is still in love with her, anxious to return to her carefree life with her fellow Apsarases, and happy enough to abandon her child in order to get free.

There are several well-known later versions of this story. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI.5.1 embeds many of the R̥gvedic verses into a prose narrative, which

seems to have misunderstood, deliberately or not, several of the crucial verses. And one of the three surviving plays of the great Classical Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa is a much expanded treatment of the pair's love affair. No subsequent version can tolerate the radical portrait of the emotionally detached Urvaśī found in the R̥gveda; in all cases the separation of the former lovers is not the result of the female's decision, but of a curse. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, a creative misreading of verse 3—involving bleating pet lambs tied to a bedpost, a thunderstorm, and the provision that Urvaśī never see Purūravas naked—results in Urvaśī's disappearance. In Kālidāsa's play the curse has no connection to anything in the R̥gvedic hymn: a love-besotted Urvaśī brings it on herself by uttering her beloved Purūravas's name at the wrong time. (In both versions the portrayal of Purūravas does retain his own passion for Urvaśī; in fact in Kālidāsa's play he goes mad after she disappears and asks birds, beasts, and trees, in the late Middle Indo-Aryan language variety Apabhraṃśa, about her whereabouts.) It is an interesting commentary on the changing fortunes of female figures that the hard edges of the R̥gvedic Urvaśī must be softened to make her acceptable in later literature.

1. [Purūravas:] "Woe, wife! Thoughtfully—stand still, fearsome woman!—
   let us two now exchange words.
   These thoughts, if unuttered, will not bring us joy even on a distant day."
2. [Urvaśī:] "What shall I do with this speech of yours? I have marched
   forth, like the foremost of the dawns.
   Purūravas—go off home again. I am as hard to attain as the wind."
3. [Purūravas:] ". . . as an arrow from the quiver of beauty, a shot winning
   cows, as a charge winning hundreds.
   Under the will of no man, she will keep flashing forth like (lightning);
   like a lamb its bleating, so are her tumultuous (tempests) displayed."
4. [Purūravas:] "She was (always) imparting energy, a good thing, to her
   father-in-law—every dawn, whenever he wants it, from the house
   opposite.
   She attained a home in which she took pleasure; day and night she was
   pierced by my rod."
5. [Urvaśī:] "Three times a day you used to pierced me with your rod, and
   you 'filled it up' [=had an erection] for me, who did not seek it.
   Purūravas, I followed your will. You were then the king of my body, you
   'hero.'"
6. [Purūravas:] "The beautifully glowing rank (of Apsarases), friends in good
   favor, interlaced like a pond's-eye [=lotus], (always) on the move—
   these flowed like reddish salves; like milk-cows they bellowed for beauty."
7. [Urvaśī:] "When this one [=the son of Purūravas and Urvaśī] was being
   born, the women were in attendance, and the rivers, gurgling to
   themselves, strengthened him,
   (just) as for great battle, for the smiting of Dasyus, the gods made you
   strong, Purūravas."

8. [Purūravas:] "When I, a human, drew near to those nonhuman women when they were taking off their robes,
like a shy antelope they shied away from me, like horses that have brushed against a chariot."
9. [Urvaśī:] "When a mortal, going to caress immortal women, mingles (with their bodies) amid their cries, as if by his intentions,
like ducks they preen their own bodies, like horses playful and constantly nipping."
10. [Purūravas:] "She who in her flight kept flashing like lightning, the watery (maiden) bringing me the delights of love—
(a son) belonging to men, nobly born, was born from the water—
Urvaśī extends Āyu his lifetime long."
11. [Urvaśī:] "You were born just so: to afford protection. (But instead) you have exerted this force on me, Purūravas.
I, knowing, instructed you on that very day. You did not listen to me. Why will you speak without profit?"
12. [Purūravas:] "When will my begotten son seek his father? (When) will he let a tear roll like a wheel, on recognizing (him [=his father])?
Who keeps apart a married couple joined in mind as long as the fire will (still) blaze in (the house of) the parents-in-law?"
13. [Urvaśī:] "I'll give him an answer when he lets his tear roll. Like a wheel he screeches for kindly care.
I will send it [=child] to you, that thing of yours that's with us. Go away home. For you will not attain me, you fool."
14. [Purūravas:] "And if the gods' pet should fly away today, never to return, to go to the most distant distance…
Then he might lie in the lap of Dissolution. Then again the ravening wolves might eat him…"
15. [Urvaśī:] "O Purūravas, don't die. Don't fly away. Don't let the unkindly wolves eat you.
There exist no partnerships with women: they have hyenas' hearts."
16. [Urvaśī:] "When in different form I roamed among mortals and spent the nights (with you?) for four autumns,
once a day I ate a drop of ghee. Just from that I continue to be sated now."
17. [Purūravas:] "She who fills the midspace, who is the measurer of the dusky realm, Urvaśī—I, the best (of men?), seek to bring her under my sway.
Since the granting of a good deed will stand you in good stead, turn back: my heart is scorched."
18. Thus these gods here say to you, Aiḍa [=Purūravas]: "As it (turned out) this way, you have a bond to death.
Your progeny will sacrifice to the gods with an oblation, but you will also rejoice in heaven."

X.96 (922) Praise of Indra's Horses

Baru Āṅgirasa or Sarvahari Aindra
13 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12–13

Like III.44 the design of this hymn is an extended pun between the words *hári/hárita* "gold-colored, tawny" (used regularly for soma and for Indra's "fallow bay" horses) and the verb *hárya* "enjoy" and its derivatives. As in III.44 we have rendered the former as "golden," even in reference to the horses, and the latter as "gladden(ing)," as a close English equivalent of this play on words. A subsidiary pun is persistent through the hymn, involving the golden mace and the golden soma (see, e.g., vs. 3); the referent of the adjective is often not expressed, and the audience is free to fill in either or both. The context often allows either, and since they are identical in gender, there is no grammatical obstacle. Similar ambiguity is found between the golden horses and the golden soma (e.g., vs. 10). In other verbal twists the "wrong" qualifier is used, but the underlying pun evokes the "right" one. Thus in verse 4 the "gladdening" mace is compared to the sun, which should really be "golden."

1. I proclaim your two golden (horses) at the great rite of distribution.
   I prevail over the gladdening, exhilarating drink for you who are eager for it,
   the drink which, like ghee, drips with golden (drops). Let the songs enter you, whose form is golden.
2. For those who have cried out together toward the golden womb are
   the ones spurring on the two golden (horses) toward it as toward a heavenly seat.
   (To him) whom they fill with golden (soma drops) as milk-cows do
   with golden (drops of ghee)—to Indra chant a fortifying (hymn), accompanied by golden (soma).
3. This is his gold-colored mace, which is made of metal. The golden (mace/soma) is eager; the golden one is in his two fists.
   Brilliant and fair-lipped is he who has as the missile of his battle fury the golden (mace/soma). The golden forms are fixed fast in Indra.
4. Like the beacon in heaven [=sun], the gladdening (mace) has been set
   in place; the (golden) mace will take wide compass like a golden (racehorse) with its charge.
   The golden-lipped (mace), which is made of metal, thrust against the
   serpent. The bearer of the golden (mace) became thousand-flamed.
5. It was just you who were gladdened when you were praised by the
   ancient sacrificers, o golden-haired Indra.
   You are glad (now): yours is every bounty, complete and gladdening,
   worthy to be hymned, o golden-born one.

6. These two gladdening golden (horses) convey in his chariot the mace-bearing, exhilarating, praiseworthy Indra in his exhilaration.
   For him who is glad for the many soma-pressings, for Indra, the golden soma juices have run.
7. Sufficient for his desire, the golden ones have run; the golden ones spur on the surpassing pair of golden (horses) for the steadfast one.
   Who speeds as he pleases with his golden steeds, he has attained his desire that provides the golden (soma).
8. Golden-bearded, golden-haired, made of metal, who, drinking the golden (soma), has grown strong on the drink of surpassing,
   who with his golden steeds, rich in prizewinning mares, will deliver his two golden (horses) beyond all difficult ways,
9. Whose golden lips, which are like two (golden) spoons, have flown apart, as he sets his two lips to twitching for the prize,
   when, after the cup is done, he will groom his two golden (horses), upon drinking of the exhilarating drink, the gladdening stalk.
10. And the seat of the gladdening (soma) is in both dwelling places. The possessor of golden (horses/soma) has roared toward the prize like a racehorse.
    Because even the great (Earth), the Holy Place, was gladdened by your might, you took on lofty vigor—yourself also gladdening.
11. You, being gladdened, (filled) the two world-halves with your greatness. You now become glad at every new dear thought.
    O lord, reveal forth to the golden sun the gladdening dwelling place of the cow.
12. Let the advance teams of the peoples convey you here in your chariot—you, the golden-lipped, in your gladness, o Indra,
    so that you will drink of the honey that is offered, finding gladness in the ten-armed sacrifice at the joint revelry.
13. You have drunk of the earlier soma-pressings, o possessor of the golden (horses/soma), and this pressing here is yours alone.
    Find exhilaration in the honeyed soma, Indra. Rain it utterly into your belly, o bull.

X.97 (923) Plants

Bhiṣaj Ātharvaṇa
23 verses: anuṣṭubh

Atharvan in character, this hymn is addressed to the healing plants, which are praised for their lineage and their powers and implored to provide remedies for particular sick men. The 1st-person speaker is presumably not merely the poet but

also the healer, and he calls on the plants to lend their power to his verbal healing spells (see esp. vs. 14).

1. The plants that were born earlier, the third generation before the gods—
   I shall now call to mind the one hundred and seven forms of those brown (plants).
2. One hundred are the forms of you all, o mother, and a thousand are your shoots.
   So then, o you all who possess a hundred strategies, make this (man) here to be free of disease for me.
3. Rejoice, o plants, since you are blooming and fruitful.
   Like victorious mares, the sprouts deliver.
4. O mothers, called "plants," o goddesses, I implore you in this way:
   "Might I gain a horse, a cow, a garment, (in gaining [=curing]) your very self, o man."
5. Your seat is in the *aśvattha*-tree; your nest is made in the *parṇa*-tree:
   you will surely get a share in the cow when you will gain [=cure] the man.
6. When the plants have come together, like kings at an assembly,
   that inspired poet is said to be a healer who smites the demons and banishes affliction.
7. The "horse possessor," the "soma-possessor," the "strengthener," the "overpowering one"—
   all these plants have I acquired for this (man) here not to be harmed.
8. The unbridled forces of the plants rise up like cows from the cowpen
   as they seek to gain the stake and your very self, o man.
9. Your mother is the "Restorer" by name, and you all are "Expellers."
   You are streambeds [=stalks] with wings [=leaves]. You expel what causes affliction.
10. They have stepped over the fences like a thief over a barricade.
    The plants have driven forth whatever malady of the body there is.
11. When I take these plants in my hand, invigorating them,
    the very self of the sickness perishes, as if before being captured alive.
12. Him whose every limb, every joint you slither over,
    from him thrust aside the sickness, like a mighty (man) lying in the middle.
13. Fly forth, o sickness, together with the *cāṣa*-bird and the *kikidīvi*-bird.
    Perish together with the swoop of the wind and together with the blizzard [?].
14. Let one of you help the other. Give help to one another.
    All of you, being in agreement—help this speech of mine.
15. Those that bear fruit and those without fruit, those without flowers and those that have flowers—
    impelled by Bṛhaspati, let them release us from distress.

16. Let them release me from (the shackle) of a curse, and also from (the shackle) of Varuṇa,
 and from the shackle of Yama—from every offense against the gods.
17. Flying down from heaven, the plants spoke:
 "The man whom we will reach (while he is still) alive, that man will not suffer harm."
18. The many plants, having a hundred appearances, whose king is Soma—
 of those you are the highest—sufficient for our desire, weal for our heart.
19. You plants whose king is Soma, spread wide along the earth—
 impelled by Bṛhaspati, jointly give heroic power to this one here [=medicinal plant].
20. Let your digger not suffer harm, nor him for whom I dig you.
 Let our two-footed and four-footed all be free of affliction.
21. Both those who hear this nearby and those who have gone far into the distance —
 all of you, having coming together, o sprouts—jointly give heroic power to this one here [=medicinal plant].
22. The plants come to an agreement with King Soma:
 "For whom the brahmin acts, him, o king, will we deliver."
23. You are the highest, o plant. The trees are your subordinates.
 Let him be subordinate to us, whoever assails us.

X.98 (924) Devāpi's Plea for Rain

Devāpi Ārṣṭiṣeṇa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn contains a prayer for rain, set in the context of a similar (successful) prayer in legendary time. The protagonists of this legend are Devāpi, a priest and poet, in fact the Hotar and Purohita (at this late stage in the Ṛgveda this latter priestly role seems to have become established) for Śaṃtanu, presumably a king, and the god Bṛhaspati. The first four verses consist of a dialogue between Devāpi (vss. 1, 3), Bṛhaspati (vs. 2), and, in our view, Śaṃtanu (vs. 4, though some scholars consider this verse the speech of Bṛhaspati). Devāpi requests Bṛhaspati to act as intermediary for him, asking the appropriate god to send rain. Devāpi must have made this request standing by the ritual fire, for in verse 2 Bṛhaspati identifies Agni as their go-between and then provides Devāpi with a speech, presumably a charm that can provoke rain. Devāpi acknowledges this gift in verse 3, and in verse 4 Śaṃtanu asks Devāpi to perform sacrifice.

The next three verses (5–7) summarize the successful outcome of this story. With verse 8 the hymn turns to present time and to the god Agni, who carried the original

plea from Devāpi to Bṛhaspati. The present poet again asks Agni to send rain (vss. 8, 10, 12), while mentioning somewhat wistfully the many sacrificial gifts we might receive (vs. 9)—gifts that he then offers to Agni (vs. 10) to present in turn to Indra (vs. 11).

1. [Devāpi:] "Bṛhaspati, confront (the appropriate) divinity for me,
   (saying): 'whether you are Mitra or Varuṇa, or Pūṣan,
   or whether you are the companion of the Maruts [=Indra], or are with
   the Ādityas or the Vasus, make Parjanya rain for Śaṃtanu.'"
2. [Bṛhaspati:] "The quick messenger god [=Agni], taking cognizance,
   went from you, Devāpi, to me.
   Turn here, face to face in front of me: I place heaven-bright speech in
   your mouth."
3. [Devāpi:] "Place heaven-bright speech in us, in our mouth, o Bṛhaspati,
   speech that is invigorating and free from affliction,
   by which we two will win rain for Śaṃtanu. The honeyed drop of
   heaven has entered (me)."
4. [Śaṃtanu?:] "Let the honeyed drops enter us. O Indra, give a thousand
   (cows) with a chariot in addition.
   Sit down to the office of Hotar; sacrifice according to the ritual
   sequence. O Devāpi, honor the gods with an oblation."
5. The seer Devāpi, the son of Ṛṣṭisena, sitting down to the office of
   Hotar, cognizant of the favor of the gods —
   he sent the heavenly rainwaters gushing from the higher to the
   lower sea.
6. In this higher sea the waters stood still, confined by the gods.
   They ran, sent gushing by the son of Ṛṣṭisena, impelled by Devāpi in
   currycomb tracks [=rivulets].
7. When Devāpi, installed as Purohita for Śaṃtanu and chosen for the
   office of Hotar, reflected with longing,
   Bṛhaspati, bestowing, gave him speech audible to the gods,
   winning rain.
8. O Agni, you whom Devāpi kindled—the son of Ṛṣṭisena, belonging to
   Manu's line, himself blazing—
   cheered on by all the gods, rouse forth Parjanya who brings rain.
9. To you the ancient seers came with their songs; to you (now) all (come)
   at the ceremonies, o much invoked one.
   For us there are thousands (of cows), with a chariot in addition. Drive
   here to our sacrifice, o you of the chestnut horses.
10. These nine and ninety thousand, along with a chariot in addition, are
    offered in you, Agni.
    With them strengthen your many bodies, o champion. Aroused, grant
    us rain from heaven.

11. These ninety thousand, o Agni—present them to the bull Indra as his share.
    Knowing the paths leading to the gods in proper order, set Aulāna among the gods in heaven.
12. Agni, thrust away scorners, away difficult depths; ward off affliction, off demonic forces.
    From this sea of lofty heaven for us send an abundance of waters gushing upon us.

X.99 (925) Indra

Vamra Vaikhānasa
12 verses: triṣṭubh

In this very obscure hymn the exact contents and referents in each verse are almost impossible to interpret and identify, and much of the translation is therefore provisional. On the other hand, the structure and progression of the hymn are surprisingly clear. Although it is an Indra hymn, at least according to the Anukramaṇī, the name Indra does not appear until the very last verse, the poet's summary verse (12b), and then only once. In fact the hymn contains almost no divine names: Rudras (in the plural, perhaps of the Maruts, perhaps not, in vs. 5) and Varuṇa in a simile in verse 10. The first four verses contain no names at all, and though subsequent verses do contain a number of them, most of these are names of enemies or of mortals aided by the gods. As in many other difficult hymns the avoidance of names seems to be meant to keep the referents deliberately unclear, and the contorted phraseology and allusions to otherwise unknown stories, especially in the earlier parts of the hymn, seem designed to keep the audience guessing and in some cases to deliberately mislead them. As the hymn goes on, Indra's identity becomes clearer, as in verse 9 with the Śuṣṇa/Kutsa saga. (On this obscure verse see also Jamison 2009d [2013].)

The grammar mirrors this gradual progress toward the recognition and perhaps the epiphany of Indra. The hymn begins in verse 1 with questions about the identity of the referents, an indication of maximal uncertainty. The next seven and a half verses (2–9ab) display an advance toward certainty: almost every half-verse begins with the pronoun *sá* "he," suggesting that the poet has a definite referent in mind, however vague it may be to the audience. But *sá* is a discourse pronoun: it does not indicate where the referent is located. Starting with the second half of verse 9 the next four half-verses begin with a form of the deictic pronoun *ayám* "this one here," strongly pointing to a referent in the immediate vicinity of the speaker. These *ayám* forms may signal the actual presence, the epiphany, of Indra, arrived at the sacrificial ground.

1. Which bright bellower of ours do you, taking cognizance, send speeding along the broad earth for strengthening?
   What is his share of strength at the break of dawn? He fashioned the mace that overcomes obstacles; he made it swell.

2. For he pursues the melody with his flashing, with his lightning. He has taken his seat upon the broad womb through his lordliness.
   Together with the nest-mates and not without his brother, he is the one who prevails over the magic tricks of the seventh.
3. He is the one who drives to the prize, though going with a (horse?) whose "off" foot is lame [?]. At the winning of the sun, intending to win he laid siege to it,
   when, unassailable, smashing the phallus-worshipers, with his form he prevailed over the property of (the place?) with a hundred doors.
4. He pours out the youthful streams, while as charger running for the cows that are at stake,
   when those in harness, though lacking feet and chariots, having wooden cups as horses, move toward the ghee, the water.
5. Together with the Rudras, the Craftsman, whose wish is unpraiseworthy but who keeps disrepute at a distance, has come here, abandoning his house.
   This reminds me of the ant couple who were away from their lair, and (someone), approaching and stealing their food, made (them) weep.
6. Just he, the household lord, subdued the mightily roaring Dāsa, with his six eyes and three heads.
   Grown strong through his might, Trita smashed the boar with his metal-tipped poetic inspiration.
7. Rising up for Manu, he will propel his arrow at the deceitful Arśasāna.
   He, most manly, well-born from Nahus and from us, split the fortresses at the smashing of the Dasyus, as was his due.
8. He, like a storm-cloud streaming water upon the pasture-land, finds a way to a peaceful dwelling for us.
   When he reverently approaches the (soma-)drop with his limbs, the falcon with claws of metal smashes the Dasyus.
9. Along with his (men) swelling with strength, (he smashed) the arrogant ones. He handed Śuṣṇa over to Kutsa for the Karpan [?].
   This one here led the poet who was being praised, who won his cloak and was the winner among superior men.
10. This one here, showing his favor along with his manly (men), wondrous together with the gods, is a master of magic power like Varuṇa.
    This one here, the lad who drinks according to the ritual sequence, has been found. He gave his (full) measure against Araru, who was four-footed.
11. Auśija R̥jiśvan, through his praises to him, burst the cowpen of Pipru together with the bull.
    When the one worthy of the sacrifice possesses the pressed soma and the song will shine, (then), being implored, with his form he (will) prevail over the fortresses.

12. In just this way, o lord, for the increase of the great one, Little Ant [/Vamraka, the poet] on his many feet crept up to Indra.
He, being implored, will create well-being for him. Refreshment, nourishment, a good dwelling—all that has he brought.

X.100 (926) All Gods

Duvasyu Vāndana
12 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 12

The most salient characteristic of this hymn is its full-pāda refrain, found in the first eleven of its twelve verses: "we choose wholeness (*sarvátātim*) and innocence (*áditim*)." (Geldner takes the latter as the proper name of the goddess Aditi, from whom we wish to obtain our choice, but not only is there no Ādityan flavor to this hymn, but such a double accusative construction is otherwise unknown with the root √*vr̥* "choose.") At first, with its abstract and somewhat moral cast, this refrain seems unrelated to the content of the verses in which it is placed, but as the hymn proceeds its relevance becomes clearer.

The hymn begins with a celebration of the soma sacrifice and the gods who partake of it, especially Indra (vs. 1) and Vāyu (vs. 2)—the latter marking the ritual as the Morning Pressing—with Savitar, the "Impeller," providing the impetus to the ritual activity (vss. 1, 3). But it slowly becomes clear that the sacrifice is not simply a physical procedure, but is intimately bound up with our emotional well-being (see esp. vss. 5c and 6c). Moreover, in verse 7 it becomes the site of our declaration of innocence before the gods, a sort of "truth formulation," though without all the formal marks of the truth formulation. At this point the refrain becomes an integral part of the verse to which it is attached. Having thus affirmed our blamelessness, we can now ask for the dangers that beset us to be banished (vss. 8–9) and for prosperity and healing to attend us (vs. 10). That the soma sacrifice is the setting for these pleas and that the elements of the ritual facilitate their fulfillment is shown by the prominence of the pressing stones (vss. 8–9) and the mixing milk for the soma (vs. 10).

The happy conclusion of the sacrifice is depicted in verse 11, the last verse with the refrain. The final verse (12), in a different meter, is a somewhat curious mixture. The first half is addressed to an unidentified referent—quite possibly Agni, since the compound "having bright radiance" is ordinarily used of him (though once of Indra and once of Savitar)—with a slightly sinister reminder slipped into the second pāda that there are still enemies around who are thriving. The second half looks like a fragment of a dānastuti, but there are no further clues as to how it might fit into the rest of the hymn.

1. O Indra, stand fast, bounteous one. A thing like you is to be enjoyed.
Praised as the soma-drinker, be here for our strengthening.
Let Savitar, along with the gods, further our (speech, so it is) heard. – We choose wholeness and innocence.

2. Bring forward for the taking a portion at the proper time, for Vāyu who drinks the pure soma, roaring in his quest,
   who has attained the drinking of the gleaming milk. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
3. May God Savitar impel vitality here to our sacrificer, the soma-presser who aims straight,
   so that we may attend upon the gods guilelessly. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
4. Let Indra be benevolent toward us always; let King Soma stay mindful of our welfare,
   in the same way that (pacts) concluded by allies bind (them [=allies]) together. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
5. Indra with his vast power has appropriated the articulation (of the sacrifice?) along with our hymn. O Bṛhaspati, you are the lengthener of lifetime.
   The sacrifice is Manu, for it is solicitude, is certainly a father to us. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
6. Indra's is the well-made divine might; Agni is the singer in the house, the wise poet.
   And the sacrifice has become our dear intimate at the rite of distribution. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
7. Neither in secret nor in the open have we done to you much ill-doing, angering to the gods, you good ones.
   Let no one of us be of the shape of untruth, o gods. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
8. Away and downward may Savitar impel affliction; even more widely let the stones drive it away,
   when the honey-pressing pressing-stone is given lofty voice. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
9. Let the pressing stone be upright when the soma-presser is there, o good ones; keep all hatreds away at a distance.
   God Savitar is to be reverently invoked as our protector. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
10. O Cows, eat nourishment in the pasture, eat fat, you who are anointed in the cup, at the seat of truth.
    Let just this body be medicine for the body. – We choose wholeness and innocence.
11. The singer bringing to fulfillment his conception is a help for each and every one; Indra himself is auspicious solicitude for those who have pressed the soma,
    whose heavenly udder is full for pouring. – We choose wholeness and innocence.

12. Bright is your radiance—your superiority brings your conception to fulfillment. (But still) there exist unassailable opponents who bring their own old age to fulfillment.
    The one offering friendship seeks to rush in the straightest line to round up the foremost of bovine stock.

X.101 (927) Priests

Budha Saumya
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 4–6, br̥hatī 5, jagatī 9, 12

Addressed to the priests of the soma sacrifice, this charming hymn first likens their ritual activities to various kinds of manual labor, especially farm labor (vss. 3–4). The preparation of soma is then compared to raising water from a well (vss. 5–7) for livestock. The preparation of the soma advances through a series of changing images (vss. 8–10), ending with a surprisingly eroticized pair of verses (11–12).

1. Wake up of one mind, o comrades. Kindle the fire together, you who are many, but from the same nest.
   I call down Dadhikrā, Agni, and goddess Dawn, all accompanied by Indra, to aid you.
2. Make things delightful; stretch out your insightful thoughts (on the loom); make a boat that crosses (the water) with its oars.
   Set your weapons in order; prepare them right. Lead the sacrifice forth to the east, comrades.
3. Hitch up the plows; stretch the yokes across; in a prepared womb strew the seed here.
   If the hearing will be commensurate with our song, the ripe (grain) should come even closer to our sickles.
4. The poets hitch up the plows; they stretch the yokes across separately—
   the insightful ones in search of favor among the gods.
5. Bring out the buckets; fasten the cords together.
   Let us dip out the watery wellspring that is easy to dip, unfailing.
6. The wellspring with its buckets prepared, with good cords, easy to dip,
   watery, unfailing do I dip.
7. Make the horses happy: you will win the (prize that is) set. Just make your chariot one that brings well-being.
   Dip out the wellspring whose buckets are the wooden (soma) cups, its wheel the (pressing) stone, its cask the (sheep's fleece) sheathing, and which gives drink to men.
8. Make a pen (for it), for it gives drink to your men. Stitch (for it) (suits of) armor, ample and broad.
   Make (for it) fortresses, metal and unassailable. Let the beaker not leak: make it solid.

9. I turn toward you an insightful thought worthy of the sacrifice, for aid, o gods—a sacrificial goddess worthy of the sacrifice here.
   She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams who has gone to the pastures.
10. Pour out the tawny (soma) into the lap of wood. Fashion (it [=wooden cup]) with axes made of stone.
   Embrace (him [=Soma]) with ten girthbands. Yoke the draft-horse to the two chariot-poles.
11. The plodding draft-animal goes between the two chariot-poles like a man with two wives in bed [/into the vulva].
   Make the lord of the wood [=tree/soma] stand in the wood. Set (it) down well, without digging out the spring.
12. The penis, the penis—raise it up, men. Rouse (it), stick (it in), to win the prize.
   Hurry the son of Niṣṭigrī hither, for help, urgently (hurry) Indra here for soma-drinking.

X.102 (928) The Race of Mudgala and Mudgalānī

Mudgala Bhārmyaśva
12 verses: triṣṭubh, except br̥hatī 1, 3, 12

We two translators have differing interpretations of some of the details and more especially of the ritual application of this hymn. These contrasting views are set out in separate signed discussions in the following introduction.

SWJ

This famous and famously enigmatic hymn presents an intriguing scenario: a chariot race (or a chariot drive) in which a man named Mudgala decisively wins the stakes, with the help of Indra, despite using unorthodox equipment and personnel that seem destined to fail him. His charioteer is his wife Mudgalānī (see vs. 2) and the team drawing the chariot seems to consist of a boisterous and ill-controlled bull yoked with an inert piece of wood (see esp. vss. 9–10). Or so is our best guess; the depiction of the race is oblique and narratively shattered.

Not surprisingly the hymn has provoked much discussion, both about the bare "facts" of the chariot race and about the meaning and purpose of the hymn as a whole. There are two major and interconnected thematic strands motivating the hymn, and these converge in the figure of Mudgalānī and are expressed especially clearly in verse 11, where Mudgalānī recovers her husband, and the pair burgeon with apparent fertility—he "dripping" and she "swelling." She is there also identified as a "(once) avoided wife," in later śrauta ritual a technical term for one of the king's wives, avoided presumably because she failed to produce offspring. So, on

one level the hymn depicts the recovery of fertility and the future production of offspring in Mudgala's line. The hovering presence and aid of the hyper-virile Indra and the emphasis throughout the hymn (see esp. vss. 4–6) on his animal stand-in, the bull pulling the chariot, reinforces this message. Mudgalānī's sexual nature is suggested by our first glimpse of her, with the wind lifting her garment (vs. 2a), and in a particularly startling verse (6) the droppings of the defecating bull keep hitting the woman who is driving him—an image that suggests, as it subverts, sexual contact between the bull and the woman. If this bull stands in for Indra, its yokemate, the wooden club, may represent an impotent Mudgala, and the announcement in verse 10 that the wooden club has now been "made to mount" may signal that Mudgala has, paradoxically, recovered his sexual potency by association with the bull/Indra.

The other thematic strand is a ritual one. In my opinion this hymn takes part in the disguised dialogue in the late Ṛgveda about the ritual innovation, the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife, the ritual patnī, into solemn sacrificial practice. As we have discussed elsewhere, various hymns and sections thereof seem to favor or oppose this innovation, but always in the guise of another discourse. This hymn seems strongly in favor of the introduction of the patnī. It begins with a pun, whose implications are worked out through the rest of the hymn. The first pāda of the hymn introduces Mudgala's chariot, which is *mithūkṛ́tam*. This word is generally translated "wrongly functioning, falsely made" or the like, and that is surely one of its implications here: the chariot is defective. But it can also mean "making/forming a sexual pair," and this is a very apt description of the new ritual model, with the Sacrificer and his Wife the pair associated with the chariot, a common metaphor for the sacrifice. The rest of hymn can be read as an extended metaphorical treatment of the new ritual model, using the same image of the sacrifice as chariot—with the Wife is charioteer, not yokemate of the Sacrificer as in some other contributions to the discussion (see, e.g., VIII.33.18). The emphasis throughout the hymn on the unorthodox and makeshift nature of the equipment and the surprising outcome in victory signals that the ritual partnership between husband and wife is a new, untried model, which nonetheless brings even more success than the old one. The happy outcome of the hymn, the recovery of her husband and the swelling fertility of Mudgalānī (vs. 11), reminds us of the relentless stress on the Wife's raison d'être in classical śrauta ritual as representative of sexuality and fertility in all their forms (see Jamison 1996a: esp. ch. 3, sect. C–E).

JPB

Alternatively, the hymn may have been composed to accompany a rite of niyoga, in which a surrogate is appointed as a substitute for an impotent or dead husband. Mudgala is the dead or impotent husband, but Mudgalānī has been able win offspring for him by finding a "bull," a potent man, who can impregnate her and secure

the continuation of Mudgala's lineage. In this interpretation, the "wooden club" in verse 9 is a symbol of the potency of the surrogate, rather than the impotence of Mudgala, especially if the "racecourse" in the middle of which it lies is a figure for the body of Mudgalānī. Verse 6 provides a possible clue to the application of this hymn. If the praise of Indra in verse 12 is taken as extra-hymnic, verse 6 is the center of the hymn, the place where the secrets of hymn are often disclosed (or buried even more deeply). It begins *kakárdave vr̥ṣabhó yuktá āsīt*. Unfortunately, as noted below, the meaning of *kakárdave* is uncertain. (It might be dative "for making kaka" as translated below, but it might also be locative "in the creaking one," referring to the cart driven by Mudgalānī.) But the rest of the pāda is simple and clear: "the bull was yoked." Again in pāda c, the poet repeats that the bull was "yoked." The reason for poet's insistence on this detail may be that *yuktá* "yoked" in this key verse points to the etymologically related "*niyoga*," the hymn's ritual context.

For further discussion of this hymn see Brereton (2002) and Jamison (2011 and forthcoming a).

1. Let Indra advance your chariot boldly (though it be) wrongly made [/forming a sexual pair].
   In this race in pursuit of fame and at the apportioning of spoils, help us, o much-invoked one.
2. The wind kept lifting up her garment when she won a thousand (cattle) and a chariot in addition.
   Mudgalānī was the charioteer in the quest for cattle; as "weapon of Indra," she pulled out the perfect ("hand" of dice) at the match.
3. Hold in check the mace of the assailant who seeks to smite (us), o Indra.
   Keep far away the murderous weapon, whether of the Dāsa or of the Ārya, o bounteous one.
4. Growing ever more excited, he drank a lake of water. The "hammer" kept going, crushing hostility.
   The (bull) with balls, seeking fame, striving to win, stretched out his forelegs vigorously.
5. Coming at him, they made him bellow; they made the bull piss in the middle of the race.
   (Yet) through him Mudgala won a thousand plus a hundred well-nourished cattle in the contest.
6. The bull was yoked for making "kaka" [=defecation] [?]. Its long-haired charioteer dodged and dodged,
   but the droppings of the frenzied bull, yoked and running with the cart, kept hitting Mudgalānī.
7. Understanding (the situation), he struck away the outer piece of its wheel, and he yoked up the bull there, working hard.
   Indra helped out the husband of the prized cows: the hump-backed bull sped with his strides.

8. Whip in hand, the man with braided hair achieved good fortune by binding the piece of wood to the strap.
   Performing manly deeds for the many folk, keeping an eye on the cows, he [=bull?] assumed his powers.
9. "Look at it here, the yokemate of the bull, the wooden club lying in the middle of the race course,
   with which Mudgala won a thousand plus a hundred cattle in the battle-drives."
10. "Troubles begone! Who has ever seen such a thing? The one whom they yoke, they (now) make him mount (the chariot/his wife?).
    They bring him neither grass nor water. The higher (end) of the chariot-pole draws (the chariot), directing (it) ever forward."
11. She has accomplished the recovery of her husband, like a (once) avoided wife: she swelling, he dripping, as if (working) with a poor (water) wheel.
    Might we also be victorious with a charioteer who is quicker than quick. Let the winnings bring good luck and possessions.
12. Indra, you are (the eye) of the entire moving world, the eye of the eye,
    when, a bull yourself, you strive to win the race with a bull, driving (him) with a steer as (his) yokemate.

X.103 (929) Indra (1–3, 5–11), Bṛhaspati (4), Āpva (12), Indra or the Maruts (13)

Apratiratha Aindra
13 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 13

A martial hymn, dense with expressions of overwhelming power and victorious might. The early parts of the hymn present Indra as the unconquerable conqueror. Stylistically this part is marked by repetition and especially by the chaining of key lexical items from the end of one verse to the beginning of the next. Curiously, X.84, a hymn to "Battle Fury," also shows this type of concatenation, and so it may be that stitching verses together in this way creates a sort of magically impenetrable verbal armor.

In the course of the hymn the focus shifts from exclusive concentration on Indra to *our* warriors and the inspiration Indra's model should provide for them to perform heroically in battle. Our men are first addressed already in the second half of verse 2, but it is in verse 6 and then in verses 10–13 that the application of Indra's behavior to that of our men and the transference of his skills and courage to them really come to the fore.

1. Swift, honing himself as a fearsome bull (does its horns), smiting again and again, the agitator of the settled domains

who makes them cry out together, the unwinking lone hero—he conquered a hundred armies all at once—Indra.

2. With him, who makes (them) cry out together, who is unwinking, conquering, combat-creating, difficult to shake, bold—
with Indra now conquer, now overwhelm the combatants, o men—with the bull with arrows in his hand.
3. He together with those with arrows in their hands, he together with those having quivers, willful Indra, with his throng, who is the one to send the combatants surging together,
conquering those sent surging together, drinking the soma, arrogant in his arms, the archer of mighty bow having his (arrows) aimed.
4. Bṛhaspati, fly around with your chariot, as demon-smasher repelling those without alliance.
Shattering the armies, pulverizing them, conquering in combat, be the helper of *our* chariots.
5. Recognizable by his power, stalwart, a hero at the fore, a prizewinner with overwhelming strength, overwhelming and mighty,
a hero on attack, a warrior on attack, born of overwhelming strength—o Indra, mount the conquering chariot as the finder of cattle.
6. The splitter of the cowpen, the finder of cows, the one with the mace in his arms, winning the course, pulverizing with his might—
show your heroism in imitation of that one, you kinfolks; pull yourselves together in imitation of him, you comrades.
7. Plunging toward the cowpens with overwhelming strength, the hero without mercy, Indra of the hundredfold battle-fury,
difficult to shake, overwhelming in battle, impossible to combat—let him further *our* armies in the combats.
8. Let Indra (go in front) as their leader, let Bṛhaspati, the priestly gift, the sacrifice, the soma go in front;
let the Maruts go to the forefront of the shattering, conquering armies of the gods.
9. Of Indra the bull and of Varuṇa the king—mighty their troop of Ādityas and of Maruts—
of the great-minded, earth-shaking, conquering gods the battle-cry has arisen.
10. Make our weapons bristle up, o bounteous one—up the minds of my own little warriors,
up, o Vṛtra-smasher, the competitive spirits of the competitors. Up let the battle-cries of the conquering chariots go.
11. *Ours* is Indra when the battle flags clash. *Our* arrows—let them conquer.
Our heroes—let them have the upper (hand). Help *us* amid the calls (to you), o gods.

12. Confusing the perception of those yonder, seize their limbs, o Lady Panic, and go away.
 Go forth against them; with flames burn them in their hearts. Let those without alliance keep company with blind darkness.
13. Go forth and conquer, o men. Let Indra offer you shelter.
 Let your arms be mighty so that you will be unassailable.

X.104 (930) Indra

Aṣṭaka Vaiśvāmitra
11 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is identified as a descendant of Viśvāmitra, and the hymn ends (vs. 11) with the Viśvāmitra refrain found in most of the Indra hymns of the IIIrd Maṇḍala (III.31.22, etc.). Like X.89, another Indra hymn of the Xth Maṇḍala ascribed to a Vaiśvāmitra and ending with the same refrain, this hymn seems like a self-consciously old-fashioned composition, falling squarely into the genre of "journey" hymn, in which Indra is invited to come with his horses to the soma-pressing. That praise poetry is at least equally important as soma at the sacrifice is made abundantly clear throughout the hymn. Toward the end (starting with vs. 8), the hymn turns to the topic of the Vr̥tra myth and, especially, Indra's freeing of the waters after his defeat of Vr̥tra.

1. The soma has been pressed for you, o much-invoked one. With your pair of fallow bays, drive swiftly to the sacrifice.
 The songs, having poets for heroes, making their way, have run to you, Indra. Drink of the pressed soma.
2. You of the fallow bays, drink here of (the soma) rinsed in the waters, pressed by our men—fill your belly!—
 which the stones have trickled for you, Indra. With these (soma drinks) increase your exhilaration, o you whose conveyance is hymns.
3. I rouse forth the drink of pressed soma, mighty and true, for the bull— for you to drive forth, o possessor of the fallow bays.
 Indra, make yourself exhilarated here with our nourishing streams, while being ably hymned with all our insightful thoughts.
4. By your help, able one, and your heroic might, the fire-priests who know the truth, acquiring the vigor
 that brings offspring, have taken their place in the house of Manu, o Indra, singing and sharing in the exhilaration.
5. Through your guidance—you of good praise, of good favor, and of much radiance, o master of the fallow bays—the peoples,
 your praisers, are acquiring your most bounteous help to bring them across—and through your liberal gifts, Indra.

6. O you of the fallow bays, drive near to our sacred formulations with your pair of fallow bays to drink of the pressed soma.
   Indra, the sacrifice has reached you, patiently waiting. You are the pious sign of the rite.
7. The bounteous one having a thousand prizes, vanquishing hostility, delighting in the pressing, (receiving) well-twisted (hymns)—
   unopposable Indra do the songs attend upon. In the singer's desire to do homage they express wonder at Indra.
8. Seven are the divine waters, very delightful and unharmable, by which you, Indra, the stronghold-splitter, crossed the boundary river,
   the ninety and nine streaming streams. You found the way for the gods and for Manu.
9. You freed the great waters from their curse, and you, the god, alone kept watch over them.
   Indra, those (waters) that you made at the overcoming of Vr̥tra, with these you should thrive in body throughout a whole lifetime.
10. The resolve proper to a hero—that's Indra, who (receives) good praises; (the good praise) as well as the (soma-)stream summon the much-invoked one.
    He shook Vr̥tra to pieces; he made wide space; as the able one, as superiority (itself), he vanquished the battle arrays.
11. – For blessing we would invoke bounteous Indra, most manly, at this raid, at the winning of the prize of victory,
    the strong one who listens, (we would invoke) for help in battles, him who smashes obstacles, the winner of prizes.

X.105 (931) Indra

Durmitra Kautsa or Sumitra Kautsa
11 verses: predominately uṣṇih (per Anukramaṇī)

The meter of this hymn is, to say the least, highly irregular and variable from verse to verse. Despite the Anukramaṇī analysis it is better analyzed as consisting mainly of verses with a seven-syllable middle pāda, and one or more triṣṭubh pādas before and/or after. See Oldenberg (1888: 158–59).

The hymn also poses many problems of interpretation, and the metrical and verbal anomalies have led many commentators to consider the text corrupt—a judgment by which we are tempted. Even if not corrupt, the text is stylistically abrupt, contorted, and compressed, and many puzzles remain unsolved. The hymn also appears to be jocular in places, making sly fun of Indra and cutting him down to size. This is especially clear in the section devoted to Indra's pair of fallow bay horses (vss. 2–5), where the poet implies that without his horses Indra is nothing

much: it's the horses that give him prestige (see esp. vss. 3–4). The sections concerning his weapon (vss. 6–7) and the sacrifice (vss. 8–10) accord Indra more of his usual glory, but still in oblique phraseology.

1. When, o good one, for (you) who yearn for praise, will your beard descend to the water,
   to the (soma) long pressed for (you) whose friendship is sought [/befriended by the wind]?
2. You who pursue your two fallow bays, well yoked but possessing separate commandments, the steeds *with slender penises,
   the two with manes like two lines—you, the houselord—
3. Apart from which two Indra stays stock-still, like an exhausted mortal overcome by fear.
   (But) when he, the forceful, has yoked them for beauty,
4. Together with them Indra will ever be famed—(though) he's (just) their sidecar and providing (them) service—
   together with the two roarers with their separate commandments Indra (will be famed) as a champion.
5. He who has mounted on the maned pair, as if on the two of broad expanse [=Heaven and Earth?], to prosper,
   the fair-lipped one wins (the soma?) with his pair of lips.
6. He of lofty might has struck up the praise song with the lofty ones. The champion fashioned it with his swelling strength,
   like an artisan [/R̥bhu] in accord with his intentions, (like?) Mātariśvan.
7. Who made his own mace, to smash the Dasyu easily—he, golden-colored, golden,
   with unbroken jaw, is like the infallible airy realm [?].
8. Grind down the crooked things for us. By our verse might we vanquish those without verses.
   Not without sacred formulations is our individual sacrifice, while you are taking pleasure in it.
9. When the threefold one has become upright for you upon the yokepoles of the sacrifice, in its place,
   then, jointly with these two [=horses?], (make?/board?) a boat that has its own glory.
10. For splendor is your dappled pourer, for splendor your spotless ladle,
    with which you pour up into your own vessel.
11. Whether a hundred are counter(part) to you, lordly one, Sumitra has praised (you) in just this way, Durmitra has praised (you) in just this way,
    in that you helped Kutsa's son in the smashing of Dasyus, in that you furthered Kutsa's kid in the smashing of Dasyus.

X.106 (932) Aśvins

Bhūtāṃśa Kāśyapa
11 verses: triṣṭubh

There is no question that this is the most frustrating hymn in the R̥gveda. Structured like another Aśvin hymn, II.39, it presents a blizzard of similes—generally one each pāda, four to a verse—with the two gods compared to all manner of animals, people, body parts, and cosmic features. Unfortunately the style goes far beyond the recondite to the utterly incomprehensible, with impossible hapaxes of unusual morphological structure, seemingly in part driven by phonological play. These words may be archaic or dialectal or slang or belong to specific technical fields or borrowed/adapted from a substrate language or playfully generated from morphological templates—or, as has been suggested, the middle section may be written in a kind of code, with phoneme-by-phoneme substitution. Or all of the above, and more.

In any case, following the eminently sensible lead of Geldner (implicitly endorsed by Oldenberg and Renou), we have simply left the middle verses (5–8) untranslated, while attempting to wring sense from the outer frame. Although many ingenious attempts have been made to interpret the baffling lexical items in this hymn and more could have been made, such attempts remain just that—exercises in ingenuity. It seems more honest, as well as truer to the spirit of the hymn, evidently designed to challenge the decoding skills of the most proficient and experienced hearers, to acknowledge its impenetrable center. From this several observations emerge. First, this appears to be the ultimate omphalos hymn. In most omphalos hymns the center holds the mystery, but the mystery is expressed in words whose purport can be puzzled out. Here that mysterious center deliberately defies analysis by being expressed in words that are tantalizingly close to familiar word-types, but whose code cannot be cracked—and rendered all the more frustrating by the presence of real, analyzable words in the midst of the semi-gibberish. The hymn takes the notion of an omphalos and carries it as far as it can go, suggesting that many mysteries will remain beyond our apprehension, or at least our apprehension by verbal means.

The outer verses (1–4, 9–11) reveal further traces of poetic structure, especially when compared with II.39 mentioned above. The parallels between the two hymns seem to be deliberate and self-consciously generated. They begin almost identically: the first pāda of II.39.1 (minus the opening simile) reads... *tád íd árthaṃ jarethe* "you two awaken to just this aim," in sense and verbal expression almost identical to our *ubhā́ u nūnáṃ tád íd arthayethe* "Now you both have just this as your aim," with the "awaken" postponed until pāda c. The final verses of both hymns (II.39.8, X.106.11) are summary verses, announcing the hymn just completed (interestingly called a mantra in this hymn) and urging the Aśvins to drive to the hymn and the sacrifice. In between are a varying number of verses, constructed as webs of similes, most of which are more complex and clever than the general run of R̥gvedic similes. It thus seems that this hymn-type provides a

template, which could generate within it an unlimited number of inventive comparisons. It is not hard to imagine this process as a competitive one, with poets vying to use the most outré words and over-strained and mannered images, all contained and controlled by the overall structure of the template. In our hymn we return to discipline from the unruly center via several verses of reasonably comprehensible similes (vss. 9–10) to reach, with some relief, the safe shore of verse 11. (It may not be entirely fanciful to suggest that the first simile in the return verses [9a] promises "firm standing in the depths"—something the audience has surely been seeking, in vain.)

1. Now you both have just this as your aim: you stretch out insights like workers their cloths.
   It has awakened you two to drive toward a common goal. You haul provisions here as you do the day-bright (days).
2. Like plow-oxen [?] you are fixed in [/to] the *pharvara*; like brawny lead-horses [?] you follow instructions.
   Because you are like messengers who acquire glory among the peoples, do not stay away like buffalo from a waterhole.
3. Joined together like the wings of a bird, conspicuous like livestock, come here to our sacrificial formula.
   Shining like the fire of a man who seeks the gods, like two encircling the earth you perform sacrifice in many places.
4. (I call upon you,) who are like friends to us, as sons do their parents—like powerful (Heaven and Earth) with their light, like kings for triumph,
   like energetic (herdsmen) for prosperity, like the two labia for enjoyment. Like obedient (servants), come here to my call.
5. *vámͅsageva pūṣaryà̄ śimbā́tā mitréva r̥tā́ śatárā śā́tapantā*
   vā́jevoccā́ váyasā gharmyeṣṭhā́ méṣeveṣā́ saparyà̄ púrīṣā
6. *sr̥̥ṇyèva jarbhárī turphárītū naitośéva turphárī parpharī́kā*
   udanyajéva jémanā maderū́ tā́ me jarā́yv ajáram marā́yu
7. *pajréva cárcaraṃ jā́ram marā́yu, kṣádmevā́rtheṣu tartarītha ugrā*
   r̥bhū́ nā́pat kharamajrā́ kharájrur, vāyúr ná parpharat kṣayad rayīṇā́m
8. *gharméva mádhu jaṭháre sanérū, bhágevitā turphárī phā́rivā́ram*
   pataréva cacarā́ candránirṇiṅ, mánar̥ṅgā mananyà̄ ná jágmī
9. Like the two lofty (world-halves) you will find firm standing in the depths, as his feet do for a man crossing a ford,
   for like two ears you will remember our instructions. Like Share and Portion, apportion to us a conspicuous reward.
10. Like *āraṅgara* you produce (the milk) in the cow whose opening is below, as bees produce honey,
    like plowmen sweating out their sweat. Like earth, (a cow) that feeds on good pasture, you are accompanied by nourishment.

11. Might we bring our praise song to fulfillment and might we win the prize of victory. Sharing the same chariot, drive here—you two—right up to our mantra
 and to the cooked honey within the cows, as if to glory. Bhūtāṃśa has fulfilled the desire of the Aśvins.

X.107 (933) Dakṣiṇā (Priestly Gift) or Its Givers

Divya Āṅgirasa or Dakṣiṇā Prājāpatyā
11 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 4

These extravagant praises of the dakṣiṇā ("priestly gift"), which is given by the sacrificer to the various priests who officiate at his sacrifice, are clearly in the poet's interests, as he stands to receive a portion of the sacrificer's largesse. The hymn seldom strays from its point—that a dakṣiṇā, once given, brings untold benefits to the giver, both material and spiritual, far exceeding the value of the original gift. It is a persuasive, if somewhat monotone, piece of work.

1. Their great generosity has been revealed. All life has been freed from darkness;
 the great light, given by the forefathers, has come. The wide path for the priestly gift has become visible.
2. High above in heaven have they taken their stand—those providing the priestly gift. Those who give horses, they (come) together with the sun;
 those giving gold receive a share in immortality; those giving garments extend their own lifetime, o Soma.
3. The priestly gift is the divine bestowal, a sacrificial offering to the gods; it is not for the stingy, for they do not bestow.
 But many men who present priestly gifts bestow through fear of disgrace.
4. Those with manly sight see (it as) the wind with its hundred streams (of rain), (as) the chant that finds the sun; they see (it as) the oblation.
 Those who bestow and present at the (sacrificial) assembly, they milk the priestly gift with its seven mothers.
5. The provider of the priestly gift goes as the first invited; the provider of the priestly gift goes to the front as the leader of the horde.
 I think just he is the lord of peoples—the one who first sought out the priestly gift.
6. They say that just he is the seer, he the creator of sacred formulations, the leader of the sacrifice, the singer of chants, the reciter of solemn words.
 He knows the three bodies of the blazing one—he who first found success with the priestly gift.

7. The priestly gift gives the horse; the priestly gift the cow; the priestly gift the lustrous and what is golden.
   The priestly gift wins the food that is our very lifebreath. He who understands makes the priestly gift his armor.
8. The benefactors have not died, nor have they gone to a failed end; the benefactors are not harmed, nor do they falter.
   What is this whole world and the sun, all this does the priestly gift give to them.
9. The benefactors at first won the sweet-smelling womb; the benefactors won a bride who is richly dressed.
   The benefactors won the right to the inner drinking of liquor. The benefactors won (against those) who come forward uninvited.
10. For the benefactor they groom the swift horse; for the benefactor the maiden sits waiting, making herself beautiful.
   This dwelling of the benefactor is like a lotus-pond, adorned and shimmering like the palaces of the gods.
11. The steadily conveying horses convey the benefactor. Rolling easily, the chariot of the priestly gift rolls on.
   O gods, help the benefactor in the raids. The benefactor will win against his rivals at the encounters (with them).

X.108 (934) Saramā and the Paṇis

Saramā and Paṇis
11 verses: triṣṭubh

In the interpretation of this well-known and delightful dialogue hymn we follow the compelling study by Hanns-Peter Schmidt in his *Bṛhaspati und Indra* (1968: 185–89). This dialogue takes place in the midst of a narrative whose outlines are clear, even if its details are not. The Paṇis have entrapped cattle in a cave. Indra and the ancient Vedic seers wish to release the cattle. Therefore, Indra sends his dog Saramā to track down the Paṇis and to demand the release of the cattle. She crosses the Rasā, the river at the border of the world that separates heaven and earth, and finds the Paṇis. The Paṇis refuse to surrender the cattle, however, and at the end Indra and the seers—the Aṅgirases and Navagvas—themselves come to the place where the Paṇis have hidden the cattle. They break open the cave through the power of the hymns they compose and chant. Because Indra's weapon in this story is not the vajra, the mace with which he destroys Vṛtra, but the truth embodied in the hymns that Indra and the seers recite, Indra is here called Bṛhaspati, "Lord of the Sacred Formulation."

The story also tells of the coming of the dawns, since the power of Indra's and the seer's words lies in the secret truth that the cattle are the dawns. Note that at the

end, the poet uses the power of this truth for his own ends: through the truth of his hymn, he should acquire or recover cattle.

Despite the seriousness of the theme, it is hard to believe that the audience did not relish the depiction of a talking dog, especially one as saucy and forthright as the faithful Saramā, who resists the offered blandishments of the Paṇis, to remain loyal to her master Indra.

1. [Paṇi:] Seeking what has Saramā arrived here, for far is the road, swallowing up (the traveler) in the distance?
   What is your mission to us? What was the final turn (bringing you here)? How did you cross the waters of the Rasā?
2. [Saramā:] Sent as the messenger of Indra I travel, seeking your great hidden treasuries, Paṇis.
   With a fear of leaping across—that helped us!—in that way I crossed the waters of the Rasā.
3. [Paṇi:] Of what sort is Indra, Saramā? What is his appearance?—he as whose messenger you raced here from afar?
   If he will come here, we will make an alliance with him, and then he will become the cowherd of our cattle.
4. [Saramā:] I know him not as one who can be deceived. He will deceive!—he as whose messenger I raced here from afar.
   Deep flowing rivers do not hide him. Smashed by Indra, Paṇis, you will lie still.
5. [Paṇi:] These cattle that you sought, Saramā, as you were flying around the ends of heaven, fortunate one—
   who will release them to you without a fight? And our battle weapons are sharp!
6. [Saramā:] Your words are no weapons, Paṇis! Let your evil bodies be impervious to arrows
   or let the path to you be impossible to follow—either way, Bṛhaspati will have no mercy on you!
7. [Paṇi:] This treasury with its foundation of rock is overflowing with cows, horses, and goods, Saramā.
   The Paṇis, who are good herdsmen, guard it. In vain have you come on an empty track.
8. [Saramā:] The seers, sharpened by soma, will come here to this place: Ayāsya [=Indra], the Aṅgirases, and the Navagvas.
   They will divide up this pen of cattle. Then will the Paṇis just vomit this speech (of theirs)!
9. [Paṇi:] Even though you have come in this way, Saramā, compelled by divine power,
   I shall make you my sister. Do not go back. We will give away a portion of the cows to you, fortunate one.

10. [Saramā:] I know no brotherhood and no sisterhood. Indra and the terrifying Aṅgirases, they know (these things).
They seemed to me desirous of cattle when I came. Go away from here, Paṇis, a very long way!
11. [Narrator:] Go far from here, Paṇis, a very long way! Exchanging places with the truth, let the cows come up
which Br̥haspati found hidden—he and the soma, the pressing stones, and the inspired seers.

X.109 (935) All Gods

Juhū Brahmajayā or Ūrdhvanābhan Brāhma
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 6–7

This short hymn has provoked much discussion, but, in our opinion, it has not been well served by its commentators. The topic of the hymn is the "Brahmin's wife," mentioned explicitly in verses 2–7, and in particular the "giving back" of the Brahmin's wife. The currently prevailing opinion about the hymn (see especially Geldner and Doniger O'Flaherty) is that it represents an early version of the story in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (IV.6.5) in which King Soma abducts the wife of Br̥haspati, the guru of the gods, and ultimately is forced to return her. Needless to say, the chronological difference—the several millennia intervening between the R̥gveda and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa—should make this connection a disfavored one unless no other possible interpretations can be found. And it is also the case that the R̥gvedic hymn lacks almost all the salient features of the purāṇic story, including the abduction.

We instead believe that the hymn relates to the much-debated issue in the late R̥gveda about the introduction of the Sacrificer's Wife into ritual performance (see, e.g., nearby X.102), and that the poet both recognizes the perils of this new ritual practice and reassures his audience that all will be well. The hymn has an omphalos structure: the first and last verses (1 and 7) concern the "offense" (*kílbiṣa*) implicitly done to the Brahmin (husband of the woman in question) by separating him from his wife and placing her in the ritual arena, where she interacts with the gods and acts as conduit of the fearsome forces unleashed by the sacrifice. Her contact with the gods is potentially adulterous, and, given the power of the gods, there is also the danger that they will not want to release her at the end of the ritual. But these possible dangers do not arise: the inner ring of the hymn (vss. 2, 6) emphatically states that the gods have given her back without rancor, and the *kílbiṣa* is expiated in the final verse (7).

The middle verses (3–5) concern the wife's activities on the ritual ground and their importance. It is she who "places what is difficult to place in the highest distant heaven" (vs. 4), in our view a reference to her role in mediating between the

earthly and divine realms especially in the animal sacrifice: she figuratively deposits the oblation in heaven by touching and ritually preparing the sacrificed animal. The most difficult verse is 5, which also contains the only R̥gvedic occurrence of the word *brahmacārín* (already in the Atharvaveda a word for "Vedic student" and later a standard way of referring to a man practicing chastity). Although the verse remains enigmatic, it is possible that it suggests that a single ritual performer (reciter of formulations) is necessary but not sufficient, and it is for this reason that the Wife has been introduced into ritual practice.

The hymn is also saturated with wedding vocabulary ("grasp the hand," "lead," etc.). This domestic ritual, in which man and wife participate jointly, provides a reassuring model for the wife's foray into the more solemn and serious realm of śrauta ritual.

For more detailed discussion, see Jamison (forthcoming b).

1. These were the first to speak at the offense against the
   Brahmin: boundless Ocean, Mātariśvan,
   powerful ascetic Fervor, staunch in rage but joy itself, the divine Waters,
   first born by their truth.
2. Soma the king first gave back the Brahmin's wife, without being angry.
   Varuṇa as ally was her escort; Agni, the Hotar, having grasped (her) by
   the hand, led (her) here.
3. The deposit is to be grasped only by her hand, just when they have
   announced: "Here is the Brahmin's wife."
   She does not stand for sending a messenger. In this way is the kingship
   of the ruler protected.
4. The ancient gods and the seven seers, who settled down to ascetic fervor,
   conversed about her:
   "Fearsome is the wife of the Brahmin, when she is led close [/initiated];
   she places what is difficult to place in the highest distant heaven."
5. The one who practices formulations keeps constantly laboring at his
   labors. He becomes (just) one limb of the gods.
   With him Br̥haspati discovered the (Brahmin's) wife, who was led by
   Soma, as (you found) the sacrificial ladle [/tongue (=Agni)], o gods.
6. The gods, verily, have given (her) back, and the sons of Manu (have given
   her) back;
   the kings [=Ādityas], making it come true, have given back the
   Brahmin's wife.
7. Having given back the Brahmin's wife, having made expiation of offense
   along with the gods,
   having shared in the nourishment of the earth, they reverently approach
   wide-ranging (space).

X.110 (936) Āprī

Jamadagni Bhārgava or Rāma Jāmadagnya
11 verses: triṣṭubh

One of the ten Āprī hymns in the R̥gveda, structured litanies to be recited at the animal sacrifice, each verse with its own key word. This hymn follows the standard Āprī pattern of course, but is notable for the amount of internal recycling of phraseology (see the echoes between vss. 2 and 10; 3 and 9; 4, 7, and 10; 4 and 8). As usual, the key words are italicized.

1. *Kindled* today in the dwelling of Manu, as god you sacrifice to the gods, o Jātavedas.
   And as observant one convey them hither, you possessing Mitra's might. You are the messenger, the prescient poet.
2. *Tanūnapāt*, anointing with honey the paths traveling to truth, sweeten them, you of lovely tongue.
   And bringing to fulfillment our mental concepts and our sacrifice through (your) hymnic visions, make our ceremony (be) among the gods.
3. Being libated, as one *to be solemnly invoked* and to be extolled, travel here in concert with the good ones, Agni.
   You are the Hotar of the gods, youthful one. Sacrifice to them when prompted, as superior sacrificer.
4. Facing east along the forward direction of the earth, the *ritual grass* is twisted at the dawning of this (dawn), in the vanguard of the days.
   It spreads out further, more widely, as a comfortable place for the gods, for Aditi.
5. Let the expansive ones gape open widely, beautifying themselves like wives for their husbands—
   you *Divine Doors*, lofty, setting all in motion, become easy for the gods to approach.
6. Richly fertile, worthy of the sacrifice—let *Dawn and Night* sit down here close together in the womb—
   heavenly maidens, lofty, with lovely ornaments, assuming brilliantly adorned splendor.
7. The two *Divine Hotars*, foremost, eloquent, measuring out the sacrifice of Manu to sacrifice it—
   the two bards at the rites, spurring on, directing the east-facing light along the forward direction (of the earth) [/at their direction].
8. Let *Bharatī* come straightaway to our sacrifice, and *Iḍā*, making (us) perceive here [=instructing us] as she did Manu.
   Let the three goddesses, (those two and) *Sarasvatī*, the good workers, sit here on this ritual grass, a comfortable place.

9. He who (adorned) Heaven and Earth, these two begetters, and who adorned all the creatures with their forms,
   to him today, to god *Tvaṣṭar*, o Hotar, superior sacrificer, perform sacrifice here when prompted, as the knowing one.
10. Send the oblations downward to the fold of the gods at the proper season, having anointed them by yourself.
    Let the *Lord of the Forest*, the Butcher, and god Agni sweeten the oblation with honey and ghee.
11. Just born, he measured out the sacrifice at once. Agni became the leader of the gods.
    At the direction of this Hotar, at his word of truth, let the gods eat the oblation, prepared with the *svāhā-cry*.

X.111 (937) Indra

Aṣṭrādaṃṣṭra Vairūpa
10 verses: triṣṭubh

On the one hand, this hymn simply recites, in straightforward but artful fashion, some of Indra's most celebrated deeds: the Vala myth and the freeing of the cows/dawns (vss. 3–4, possibly 2), the Vr̥tra myth and the freeing of the waters (vss. 6, 8–10), with several others glancingly referred to: the propping of heaven and fixation of the earth (vss. 4–5), the smashing of Śuṣṇa (vs. 5). As often, the Vala and Vr̥tra myths are sometimes superimposed upon each other, with the cows/dawns of the former conflated with the waters (also female) of the latter. For example, the first pāda of verse 8 seems to continue the travels of the Dawns found in verse 7, but the next pāda makes it clear that the referent is actually the waters of the Vr̥tra myth.

On the other hand, and especially in its first few verses, the hymn concerns itself with the interaction between poems and deeds. In verse 1 we poets rouse Indra by making his deeds real, that is, by celebrating them in poetry. In verse 2 the poetry almost seems to precede and stimulate the deed, and verse 3 provides us a picture of Indra whose knowledge of his own deeds seems to derive from hearing about them from poets. If our understanding of verse 4 is correct, the power of poetry to provoke the deeds it celebrates is put into the mythic past, with the Aṅgirases bringing Indra's feats to realization by their hymns. Although this theme disappears in the rest of the hymn, to a poetically acute audience its resonances would probably still be felt in the more conventional treatment of Indra's deeds that follows.

1. Inspired ones, bring forth an inspired thought, in whatever (manifold) ways men's thoughts are.
   We will rouse Indra here with his deeds made real [=as hymns]. For he is a hero known to long for song.

2. Because the hymnic vision flashed out from the seat of truth, the bull, born from a heifer, came together with the cows [=Dawns/hymns].
   He arose with a powerful roar. He entirely encompassed the dusky realms, though they are great.
3. Indra certainly knows of this, from hearing it. For he was the victorious path-maker for the sun,
   and after that, making a wife from a cow [=Dawn], he became the husband of the cow and lord of heaven, immovable, ancient born, unopposable.
4. Indra by his greatness confounded the commandments of the great Flood [=Vala], while being hymned by the Aṅgirases.
   He rooted the dusky realms, though they are many—he who buttressed their buttress by means of (their [=Aṅgirases'] poetic?) realization.
5. Indra is the counterpart of heaven and of earth. He knows all the pressings; he smites Śuṣṇa.
   With the sun he stretched through heaven, though it is great. He also propped it up with a prop, (himself) a better prop (than the prop).
6. Because with your mace as Vr̥tra-smiter you laid Vr̥tra low, (laid low) the wiles of the godless one swollen with strength,
   you then, bold one, boldly hewed him apart, and so you became arm-strong, bounteous one.
7. When the Dawns kept company with the Sun, their beacons found his glittering gift,
   the heavenly body that appeared here from heaven. No! No one really knows about its going (away) again.
8. Certainly the first of these females have gone into the distance, the waters that flowed at the impulsion of Indra.
   Where is their top, where their bottom? Waters, where is your middle, where now your end?
9. You let loose the rivers that had been swallowed by the serpent. Right after that they roiled forth at speed—
   those seeking release and those that had been released. Then they did not rest, once pointed down.
10. Converging, they went to the river like willing girls. From of old the stronghold-splitter has been acknowledged as their lover.
    To your house have come the earthly goods; to us your many liberalities, Indra.

X.112 (938) Indra

Nabhaḥprebhedana Vairūpa
10 verses: triṣṭubh

A conventional invitation to the soma-drinking, specifically that of the Morning Pressing (see esp. vs. 1). As usual, Indra is urged to travel to our sacrifice with his pair of horses (esp. vss. 2, 4) and to drink the soma, whose serving is described. Also as often, the rival sacrificers who try to tempt Indra to their soma are mentioned and the superior charms of our offerings are touted (vs. 7). The poet also promises a verbal performance celebrating Indra's deeds to accompany the soma offering (vs. 8, also vs. 1), and a very abbreviated précis of the Vala myth is given in the second half of verse 8. The final verse (10) expresses our hopes for Indra's reciprocal generosity.

1. Indra, drink of the pressed soma at your pleasure, for the Early-Morning Pressing, the first drink, is yours.
   Excite yourself, to smite the rivals, o champion. With hymns we shall proclaim your manly deeds.
2. Your chariot that is swifter than thought, Indra, with it drive here for soma-drinking.
   Straightaway let your fallow bays run forth here, with which bullish ones you drive while in exhilaration.
3. Cause your body to be touched by the golden luster of the sun, by its fairest forms.
   When you are invoked by us, your comrades, Indra, in common with us, become exhilarated upon sitting down—
4. You, in the raptures of exhilaration, whose greatness these two great world-halves did not encompass—
   Indra, drive here to this home with your yoked fallow bays, to the dear food with the dear ones.
5. Having drunk of it time after time, Indra, you have done in your rivals, have done inimitable joyous [/martial] (deeds).
   It rouses your plenitude and power; Indra, it is pressed for your exhilaration—the soma!
6. Here is your cup acquired of old, Indra: drink soma with it, you of a hundred resolves.
   The trough is full of exhilarating honey, which all the gods delight in.
7. Because the peoples, with their pleasurable offerings set forth, vie in invoking you in many ways, bullish Indra,
   ours will become the most honeyed ones for you—these pressings here. Delight in them.
8. I will proclaim your previous heroic deeds, proclaim now those first performed.

You, of real battle fervor, made the stone give way; you made the cow easy to find, for the sacred formulation.

9. Sit down, Lord of Throngs, amid the throngs. They call you the most inspired of the wise poets.
   Without you, at a distance from you, nothing whatever is accomplished. Chant a great brilliant chant, bounteous one.
10. By watching over us, who are in need, bounteous one, become a comrade to your comrades, o lord of goods.
    Do battle, you battle-doer [/make joy, you joy-maker] whose impetuous powers are real. Give us a portion of wealth, even in what is (as yet) unapportioned.

X.113 (939) Indra

Śataprabhedana Vairūpa
10 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 10

Indra's great deeds, especially the smiting of Vṛtra (vss. 2–3, 6–8), are once again the subject of this hymn, but the emphasis is on the other gods who contributed to the success of Indra's exploits: Heaven and Earth (vs. 1), Viṣṇu (vs. 2), Mitra and Varuṇa (vs. 5), and especially the Maruts (vss. 2–3, 6). In depicting these various partnerships between Indra and various gods, the poet is establishing the model for a similar relationship between Indra and the present poets and sacrificers. In verse 8 he attributes to "all the gods" the ritual strengthening of Indra by means of praise poetry and soma—an exact parallel to mortals' standard activity on behalf of Indra. In the first half of verse 9 in rather labored language he then addresses his fellow priest-poets, urging them to spell out to Indra their mutual acts of partnership—and providing in the second half of the verse a mythic example of Indra's aid to a mortal in return for hospitality. (Dabhīti's hospitality to Indra and Indra's requital of it by rendering Dabhīti's enemies Dhuni and Cumuri powerless are recounted elsewhere; see, e.g., VI.20.13 and VI.26.6.) Finally in verse 10 he addresses Indra directly, requesting goods from him. Interestingly, it seems that the poet is not asking for these goods for himself, but presumably for his patron, so that the patron in turn will consider the poet a successful wordsmith and reward him appropriately.

1. Heaven and Earth, of one mind with all the gods, assisted his impetuous force.
   Creating his own greatness and Indrian power as he went, upon drinking the soma the resolute one increased.
2. Viṣṇu with his strength (assisted) his [=Indra's] greatness, having run to the plant [=soma]. It teems with honey.
   Upon smiting Vṛtra with the gods [=Maruts] as fellow travelers, bounteous Indra became worthy to be chosen.

3. When, bearing weapons, you stood with Vr̥tra the serpent, for battle, to acquire a laud,
 all the Maruts together in person there increased your greatness and Indrian power, strong one.
4. On just being born, he thrust aside the challengers. The hero looked forward to his masculine power, to battle.
 He split the stone; he discharged the flowing streams downward. He propped the broad firmament with his skillful work.
5. Thereupon Indra was entirely master of his powers. He thrust apart more widely heaven and earth.
 Emboldened [/bristling with excitement], he brought down the metal mace, agreeable to Mitra and to pious Varuṇa.
6. The teeming ones [=Maruts] hastened there for the powers of Indra, for the battle fury of the mettlesome one,
 when the strong one split apart Vr̥tra with strength—Vr̥tra, who was holding the waters but was himself enclosed by darkness.
7. The two who together approached the heroic deeds first to be performed, taking their (battle) places with their great powers—
 smoky darkness dusted down on (the one), when he was smashed. Indra by his greatness became lord over the early invocation.
8. All the gods then increased your bullish powers with eloquence accompanied by soma.
 He ate the serpent Vr̥tra subdued by Indra's blow, as fire does dry food with his jaws.
9. With skillful words accompanied by chants, by reason of your (acts of) comradeship (for him), proclaim the many (acts of) comradeship (for us).
 Indra is famed as subjugating Dhuni and Cumuri for Dabhīti by reason of his [=Dabhīti's] mind of trust (in ritual hospitality).
10. You—bring hither many (gifts of) good horses, because of which I shall be considered one who pronounces efficacious enigmas.
 Along ways easy to travel may we traverse all difficult passages. Find a ford for us today in wideness.

X.114 (940) All Gods

Sadhri Vairūpa or Gharma Tāpasa
10 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 4

A mystical treatment of the sacrifice, whose mysteries unfortunately remain for the most part unsolved, despite many attempts to identify the referents and relationships of the striking images presented. We will not here add another, most likely doomed, experiment in exegesis, although some possible referents are inserted in brackets below. What is clear is that the elements in the ritual and elements in the

cosmic world are identified with each other (in the style of the bandhus, or mystical identifications, so characteristic of middle Vedic literature), but by way of a mediating esoteric image that can apply to both (at least to "those who know"). This style is especially evident in the first verses of the hymn, while numerology comes more and more to dominate the later verses. Indeed, significant numbers are found from the very beginning (the two heats of vs. 1, the three dissolutions of vs. 2, the four braids and two eagles of vs. 3), but the manipulation of numbers begins in earnest with verses 4–5. These same two verses contrast the poet with his "simple mind," who sees only one entity (vs. 4), with the inspired ones and sage poets (vs. 5), who use their words to make that single entity manifold. Even though many of the details of this enigmatic hymn remain obscure, we can see in this contrast the inherent message of the hymn, that insight and its verbal product, poetry, have the power to give shape and multiplicity to the perceptible world.

1. The two contiguous heat (sources) [=fire and sun/gharma pots/or chant
   and melody] have pervaded the threefold (world) [/Trivr̥t Stoma].
   Mātariśvan has come to enjoyment of the two.
   Seeking to acquire the milk of heaven, they have toiled: the gods know
   the chant provided with melody.
2. Three (Goddesses of?) Dissolution reverently approach to be pointed
   out, for the conveyors (of songs?) who hear from afar recognize them.
   The sage poets discern the connection of those (goddesses), (although
   they dwell) among the distant hidden commandments.
3. The well-ornamented, ghee-faced young woman with four braids [=vedi
   ("altar")/night sky?] clothes herself in the (ritual) patterns.
   Two bullish eagles have settled down on her, where the gods have
   acquired their share.
4. The eagle is (really just) one—it has entered the sea; it surveys all this
   creation.
   With my simple mind I saw it nearby: the mother licks it, and it licks the
   mother.
5. The inspired ones, the sage poets configure the eagle, though it is just
   one, in many ways with their words.
   And arranging their meters at the ceremonies, they measure twelve
   cupfuls of soma.
6. Configuring the four as thirty-six and arranging the meters up to twelve
   (syllables?),
   having measured out the sacrifice with their inspired thought, the poets make
   the chariot [=sacrifice] roll forth with r̥c and sāman [/verse and tune].
7. Fourteen are the other powers of this one [=chariot of the sacrifice].
   Seven wise ones [=priests] lead it forth with their speech.
   The opulent ford—who will here proclaim it: the path by which they take
   the first drink of the soma?

8. Thousandfold are the fifteen ukthas. As great as heaven and earth, so great is that.
 Thousandfold are the thousand powers. As far as the sacred formulation is spread out, so far is speech.
9. Who is the wise one who knows the yoking of the meters? Who has undertaken the holy speech?
 What champion do they call the eighth of the priests? Who indeed has discerned the two fallow bays of Indra?
10. Such ones circle around the end of the earth, (while) they have stayed yoked to the poles of the chariot.
 They [=gods?] distribute the legacy of their labor to them, when Yama becomes established in his secure habitation.

X.115 (941) Agni

Upastuta Vārṣṭihavya
9 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 8, śakvarī 9

This hymn mixes dense and syntactically contorted descriptions of Agni in his natural and ritual aspects with simple declarations of praise of the same god, such that the hymn gives the impression of ending several different times. For example, verse 5 appears to fit the type of a hymn-ending summary verse, calling on the god for aid, but it interrupts the two most complex verses (vss. 4, 6) characterizing Agni as fire, which appear to belong together, however unclear some of the details are. The last three verses of the hymn (7–9), each in a different meter, provide three alternative endings to the hymn, each with overt signals of a final summary verse: verse 7 (in the same meter as the first six verses) *evā́... stave* "thus he is praised"; verse 8... *íti tvā... vandate... vā́k* "so does the speech extol you"; and verse 9 *íti tvā... avocan* "so have they proclaimed you." It is difficult to know what to do with this overabundance of finales.

The descriptive verses (1–4, 6) repay attention, with bold images and multiple puns (e.g., *druṣád* in verse 3, literally "wood-sitting," which is equally applicable to Agni sitting on firewood and to the two associated similes: a bird sitting in a tree and the soma-drop sitting in the wooden cup). As noted above, verses 4 and 6 are especially complex, and they have been variously interpreted. In our view these two verses concern Agni and his flames. In verse 4 he is surrounded by his flames, cleverly compared both to the very active winds and to immovable mountains, and they urge him, here identified, as sometimes elsewhere, as Trita, to mount an expedition. But in verse 6 his own flame concedes to his superior power, even as he seeks food in inhospitable places. But other interpretations are certainly possible.

1. Brilliant is the waxing of the tender babe, though he does not approach his two mothers to suck.
   When the udderless one has begotten him, even then has he waxed strong in an instant, undertaking a great mission.
2. He has been established in the house, as “Agni” by name, as the best workman, who wrests together the (pieces of) wood with his gnawing tooth,
   with his grinding tongue—he of good ceremony, snorting like a powerful bull in a pasture.
3. Him (I invoke) for you—the god sitting on the wood like a bird in a tree, (like) the drop from the stalk in the wooden cup, snorting, shaving (the ground), undulating,
   the conveyor (of the oblations) with his mouth like a draft-horse, abundant with flame, like someone with a great commandment racing along the ways.
4. O unaging one, you whose (flames), as you spread out eager to burn, like winds, (like) immovable (mountains), encircle (you)—
   battle-lusty they reach Trita [=Agni] like combatants a consummate warrior, commanding him to seek.
5. Just this Agni, best of the Kaṇvas, comrade of the Kaṇvas, overcomer of the distant stranger and the one close by—
   let Agni protect the singers, Agni the patrons; let Agni give us their help.
6. O you of good ancestry, to the best prizewinner, the mightier one, to Jātavedas (does) the (flame?) stirring thirstily con(cede),
   to him who acts boldly when he is by choice even in a waterless place, to the greatest one, the one who seeks greedily for food even through a wasteland.
7. Thus is Agni praised along with the mortal patrons as the good one, the spirited (son) of strength by men—
   (the patrons) who, well-installed like allies, truth-seeking, like the heavens with their heavenly brilliance surmount the (other) descendants of Manu.
8. “O child of nourishment, mighty one”—so does the bullish speech of Upastuta extol you.
   We shall praise you—we who are rich in heroes because of you, establishing a longer lifetime further for ourselves.
9. So have the sons of Vr̥ṣṭihavya, the Upastutas, seers, proclaimed you, o Agni.
   Protect them—both singers and patrons. Saying “*Vaṣaṭ, vaṣaṭ*,” (standing) upright they have reached (you); saying “Homage, homage,” (standing) upright they have reached (you).

X.116 (942) Indra

Agniyuta (or Agniyūpa) Sthaura
9 verses: triṣṭubh

A fairly straightforward hymn that remains focused on its insistent themes: the invitation to Indra to drink the soma, and the expectations we have of him after he has done so. The first four verses issue the invitation; verses 5–6 ask Indra to use the strength imparted by our soma to defeat our enemies, while the invitation is reiterated in verses 7–8. The hymn proceeds in part by verses paired in theme and language, though verses 3–4 do not show the repetitions and patterned variation in the other three pairs. The final verse (9) summarizes the poet's work while ending with a striking image of the gods as dice, giving (and presumably also withholding) luck.

1. Drink the soma for great Indrian strength. Drink for Vr̥tra-smashing, most powerful one.
   Drink for wealth and for power while you are being called. Drink of the honey; drench yourself in it, to satiety, o Indra.
2. Drink of this pressed soma, presented along with the (sacrificial) animals, according to your wish, Indra.
   Giving well-being, bring yourself to exhilaration in your mind, being inclined our way for our rich good fortune.
3. Let the heavenly soma exhilarate you, Indra; let what is pressed among earth-dwellers exhilarate you.
   Let that exhilarate you by which you made wide space; let that exhilarate you by which you melt down your rivals.
4. Doubly lofty, undiminishing, let Indra the bull drive here with his two fallow bays to the stalk that is poured around.
   As smasher of the non-luminous, (smashing) the hammer utterly, drench yourself in the honey, pressed on the cow(hide) and brought forth.
5. Blunt the sharpened points, slacken the taut (bowstrings) of those incited by sorcerers.
   I give power and strength to you who are mighty. Confronting your rivals, hew them down amid the contesting voices.
6. Loosen the fame of the stranger, Indra, and his might and hostilities like the taut (strings) of a bow.
   Turning toward us, having grown strong in your powers, unblunted, make your body strong.
7. This oblation is given to you, bounteous one. Accept it, being without anger, o universal king.
   It is pressed for you, bounteous one, and cooked for you: eat and drink of it when it is presented, Indra.

8. Eat just these oblations presented here, Indra. Take your delight in the cooked foods and the soma.
   Bringing the pleasing offerings, we enjoy you. Let the desires of the sacrificer come true.
9. I send forth my eloquent speech to Indra and to Agni; like a boat upon a river I sent it forth with my chants.
   Like dice, the gods whirl around—they who give the stakes to us and get the lucky break.

X.117 (943) Praise of Generosity [*dhanānnadānapraśaṃsā*]

Bhikṣu Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2

Unusual in both subject matter and tone. This hymn has no divine dedicand, but in the Anukramaṇī is termed a "praise of the gift of wealth and food." There is, in fact, almost no mention of divinities or divine powers in the hymn, an almost unique situation in the R̥gveda; the gods figure only in the first verse and there only obliquely. The emphasis is instead on the mutual relations between humans (comradeship; see, esp., vss. 3–4, 6) and the obligation of the fortunate to provide for those in need. Insofar as the R̥gveda treats the ethical responsibilities of men, ethical behavior is ordinarily mediated through the gods, especially Mitra and Varuṇa, but here there is no such mediation: the admonitions to behave properly to one's fellow men are direct and no gods are represented as observing and judging human behavior.

The argument for generosity is twofold and is couched not in purely ethical terms, but in terms of self-interest. On the one hand, giving does not do the giver any harm, as his stores do not become depleted. This sentiment is expressed most clearly in verse 1c, but it seems also to underlie the maxim-like verses 7 and 8. Verse 7 seems to be a version of the slightly vulgar English expression "use it or lose it," while verse 8 suggests that sheer quantity isn't the measure of power and effectiveness: the more "feet" an entity has, the less its autonomy and power. On the other hand, not giving does the ungenerous man actual harm. In part, the harm is simply the isolation produced by not acting in a comradely manner. As verse 6 says succinctly, "who eats alone has only evil." But it is also the case that one's fortunes can change (see esp. vs. 5). Those who are rich and well fed today may find themselves in need in the future, and it is best to forge comradely ties by giving now, in case the situations of giver and receiver are reversed.

The tone of the hymn is colloquial and conversational. A number of verses deploy what appear to be old sayings or popular adages, distilled folk wisdom, whose pertinence to the topic at hand is indirect and requires some figuring out. Because of their rarity in the high-register texts of early Vedic, such expressions are very precious, though they can be hard to penetrate.

The Anukramaṇī identifies the poet as Bhikṣu (“beggar”) Āṅgirasa, a name presumably suggested after the fact by the subject matter, especially since the word *bhikṣu*, though very common and culturally important in later times, does not occur in the R̥gveda or indeed any Vedic text that we know of.

1. Truly the gods did not give hunger as the only deadly weapon, and the forms of death do come upon him who is well fed.
   Moreover, the wealth of one who gives does not become exhausted, and the non-giver finds no one to show mercy.
2. Whoever—when a man, weak and broken, has approached desiring nourishment—though he has food,
   hardens his heart, though he always used to be his friend, he also finds no one to show mercy.
3. Just he is a benefactor who gives to the beggar who, emaciated, goes roaming, desirous of food.
   He becomes sufficient for him at his pleading entreaty, and he makes him his companion in the future.
4. He is no companion who does not give of his food to a companion, who, being in his company, accompanies him.
   He should turn away from him; this is not a home. He should seek another who gives, even a stranger.
5. The stronger man should give to one in need. He should look along the longer path,
   for riches turn like chariot-wheels: they come up to one man after another.
6. The undiscerning man finds food in vain. I speak the truth: it is just a deadly weapon for him.
   He does not prosper in compatriot, nor in companion. Who eats alone has only evil.
7. It’s just when it plows that a plowshare makes a man well fed. It’s just when he goes that a man “wraps up” the road with his feet.
   The formulator who speaks is more a winner than the one who doesn’t; a friend who gives would be superior to one who doesn’t.
8. The one-footed [=sun?] has stridden farther than the two-footed [=man?]; the two-footed overtakes the three-footed [=old man?] from behind.
   The four-footed [=dog?] comes at the call of the two-footed ones as it watches over the fivefold ones [=herds?], staying by them.
9. Two hands, even though the same, do not accomplish the same. Even two (cows) with the same mother do not yield the same milk.
   The heroic deeds even of twins are not the same. Two men, even though they are kin, do not give the same.

X.118 (944) Agni Rakṣohan

Urukṣaya Āmahīyava
9 verses: gāyatrī

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns the hymn to Agni Rakṣohan "Demon-Smiter," this aspect of the god is very muted in the hymn—found only in verses 1, 7–8 and rather tamely even there. The exuberantly and ingeniously violent punishments envisaged in the other Rakṣohan hymn in X (X.87) are entirely absent. Instead the dominant picture is of a peaceful sacrificial hearth in which the fire responds happily to the attentions, and especially the butter oblations, of his worshipers. Stylistically the hymn is characterized by chaining: the repetition of a word or phrase from one verse in the next, with a different word or phrase from that verse repeated in the following one.

1. O Agni, you strike down the devourer as you shine here among mortals
   in your own dwelling place, o you of blazing commandment.
2. You stand up when you are well bepoured. You rejoice in response to the ghee,
   when the ladles have converged on you.
3. When bepoured, he shines widely. Agni is to be reverently invoked with a hymn;
   his face is anointed with the ladle.
4. Honey-faced Agni, when bepoured, is fully anointed with ghee,
   bringing radiant goods as he shines.
5. Awakening, you become fully kindled, o you who carry the oblations to the gods;
   upon you do mortals call.
6. O mortals, serve immortal Agni with ghee,
   the undeceivable lord of the household.
7. With undeceivable flame, o Agni, burn demonic power.
   Shine as the herdsman of truth.
8. With your face, o Agni, flame against the sorceresses,
   as you shine among those dwelling far and wide [/the Urukṣayas].
9. With their hymns those dwelling far and wide [/the Urukṣayas] have fully kindled you, the oblation-carrier,
   the best sacrificer among the people descended from Manu.

X.119 (945) Self-Praise of the "Lapwing" [*laba*]

Laba Aindra
13 verses: gāyatrī

A famous and often translated 1st-person account of the experience of soma-drinking. Who the 1st-person speaker is meant to be has generated much discussion. The Anukramaṇī calls this the ātmastuti "self-praise" of a *laba* (a word that does not appear in the hymn or in the R̥gveda), a particular type of bird, the lapwing—while commentators have generally identified the speaker either as the poet or as a particular god, usually Indra or Agni. We are inclined toward a version of the interpretation of George Thompson (2003). Thompson situates the hymn in the genre of ātmastuti, with its boastful self-assertion and the impersonation, or role-playing, by a poet of "a divine agent." Under this interpretation, the speaker is fundamentally the poet, but the poet consciously taking on the voice and identity of another entity or entities—in our view, both that of a bird and that of a god, indeed of Indra.

The presence of the poet is clearest in his claims about his mind and the thought that approaches him and that he shapes (vss. 1, 4–5). It is even possibly visible in the spirited refrain—"Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!"—in which the speaker interrogates himself and only after this internal verbal exchange asserts that he has consumed soma. (One might suggest, only partially in jest, that Indra would not need this verbal self-reassurance.) To characterize the soma-drinking experience the poet borrows the identity of a bird, suggesting that the overwhelming sensation is that of flight, lifting him up (vss. 2–3), making the people on the ground seem impossibly small and insignificant (vs. 6) and his own wings large enough to cover the cosmos (vss. 7, 11). But this prodigious creature cannot be *only* a bird, for the speaker boasts of his control of the cosmic spaces and his ability to move the earth at will (vss. 8–10). These boasts are most appropriate to Indra, who commonly manipulates cosmic entities, who is most likely to engage in self-vaunting ātmastuti (cf., e.g., X.48–49), and who is the archetypal soma-drinker among the gods. The hymn ends (or almost ends) with the apparent epiphany of Indra in verse 12, triumphantly announced by "here I am" (*ahám asmi*) and calling attention to his presence in the ritual arena.

The final verse (13) seems an anticlimax, and its contents also sit uneasily in the rest of the hymn. The identity that this 1st-person speaker claims, that of oblation-carrier (*havyavā́hana*), is responsible for the view that the speaker throughout the hymn is Agni, for *havyavā́hana* and its variant *havyaváh* are always epithets of that god. But the fact that Agni speaks this verse does not require that he be the speaker in the rest of the hymn. In our view this verse, like many final verses, marks a shift of subject or a coda. The speaker is indeed Agni. It seems possible that Indra's epiphany in the preceding verse has brought him face to face with the principal god of the ritual and the ritual ground, namely Agni, and that Agni borrows the rhetoric of Indra to make his own counter-boast and assert the importance of his own role—though his somewhat pedestrian self-comparison to a well-equipped household contrasts almost comically with the soaring and exuberant language of the rest of the hymn.

1. Yes for sure! Yes (says) my mind: I could win cow and horse—yes!
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
2. Forth like raging winds, the draughts have lifted me up.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
3. The draughts have lifted me up, like swift horses a chariot.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
4. A thought has come up close to me, like a bellowing cow to her
   dear son.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
5. Like an artisan a chariot-box, I bend the thought around with my heart.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
6. Because the five peoples have not appeared to me to be even a speck…
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
7. Because both world-halves are not equal to even one wing of mine…
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
8. By my greatness I have surmounted heaven and this great earth.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
9. Blast it! I will set down this earth here—or over here.
   – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
10. I will keep smiting the earth to blazes—here or over there.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
11. In heaven is one wing of mine; I have dragged the other below.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
12. Here I am—greater than great, sped upward to the clouds.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!
13. As a household that is properly equipped, I journey as the carrier of the
    oblations to the gods.
    – Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!

X.120 (946) Indra

Bṛhaddiva Ātharvaṇa
9 verses: triṣṭubh

For most of its length this hymn is a fairly straightforward praise of Indra, his powers, and his victories. There is special emphasis also on the relation between Indra and his verbally active “helpers.” The relationship is hierarchal—Indra is supreme—but also reciprocal, in that the helpers cheer him on and fortify him for his exploits (esp. vss. 1–4). The helpers are not named; the two most prominent Indra myths, Vṛtra and Vala, both feature a troop aiding or encouraging Indra: the Maruts and the Aṅgirases respectively. It is thus possible that either or both groups are meant here, and, further, that human poets are assimilated to these divine choruses (see vs. 4).

The encouragement becomes more personal in verse 5, where a 1st-person speaker assumes the role of verbal inciter. This is surely the poet himself, but, we will claim, not a mere human poet. The last two verses of the hymn (8–9) summarize the performance context of the hymn. Verse 8 begins "Bṛhaddiva speaks these sacred formulations to Indra," and Bṛhaddiva is named again as the poet in verse 9 (as well as being so identified by the Anukramaṇī). But verse 9 introduces a puzzle or a surprise, for it begins, "In this way Bṛhaddiva addressed his own self—that is, Indra." It is difficult to read the sentence in any other way, though many have tried, but if Indra is the same as Bṛhaddiva, who is Bṛhaddiva?

A way to a solution to this conundrum has been presented by Hanns-Peter Schmidt, though he himself does not discuss this hymn. As Schmidt convincingly argues (1968), Bṛhaspati was originally an epithet and aspect of Indra, especially in the Vala myth, in which Indra uses not brute strength but verbal skill to open the Vala cave and release the stolen cows. Bṛhaspati becomes detached from Indra and treated as a separate god, but this process is a protracted one and can be observed happening in the Ṛgveda. We suggest that this hymn reflects an awareness of their original identity and their growing separateness, with the verbally adroit Bṛhaspati, master of sacred formulations (*bráhman*; see vss. 5d and 8a), praising his other self, the king and victorious warrior Indra. The name Bṛhaddiva (lit., "possessing lofty heaven") is reminiscent of Bṛhaspati, and the sacred formulations he addresses to Indra in verse 8 precisely concern the Vala myth, the locus of their identification.

1. Just this was the foremost among living beings, from which the mighty one of vibrant manly spirit was born.
   As soon as he is born, he melts down his rivals, while all his helpers cheer him on.
2. Having grown strong through his swelling power, he of much might, as rival to the Dāsa, creates terror for him.
   On your winning the animate and the inanimate, (your helpers) bellow to you together at the presentation (of the soma), at the revels.
3. All bend their will toward you, even when these helpers are twice or three times as many.
   "Send the sweeter than sweet surging together with the sweet. With honey, battle for that honey yonder."
4. For it is even in those words that at every revel the inspired poets cheer you on as you win the stakes.
   Stretch your mightier (bow) taut, bold one. Let the sorcerers of evil ways not deceive you.
5. Through you we have become exultant in our battles, as we see before us the many fights to be fought.
   I rouse your weapons with my words; I hone your vital powers with my sacred formulation.

6. (I praise) him who is worthy of praise, the craftsman possessing many forms, the strongest Āptya of Āptyas.
   He will shatter the seven Dānus with his swelling strength; he will overcome the many opposing forces.
7. You deposited this, both the nearer and the farther, in the house in which you helped with your help.
   You cause the two parents [=Heaven and Earth], who were in motion, to stay still, and then you spur on many deeds.
8. Bṛhaddiva speaks these sacred formulations fortissimo to Indra: "the first to win the sun,
   he has dominion over the great cowpen of the sovereign king, and he opened up all the doors that are his own."
9. In this way, great Bṛhaddiva, the Atharvan, addressed his own self—that is, Indra.
   The stainless sisters, who stay by their mother, speed him with swelling strength and make him strong.

X.121 (947) Ka "Who?"

Hiraṇyagarbha Prājāpatya
10 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn takes the form of a cosmogony, but here the creative principle is unnamed or has no name. Rather than declaring its deity, the hymn's refrain is a question: "Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?" Although without a name, the deity has a form. In the first verse the poet calls it *hiraṇyagarbhá* "the golden embryo" (vs. 1a), the yolk of an egg (cf. Lommel 1939), thus anticipating later myths of creation from a world-egg (e.g., Vāmana Purāṇa Saromāhātmya XXII.17). But the "golden embryo" is also the sun, which here is born as the center of the cosmos. Toward the end of the hymn, in verse 7, the poet gives the still unnamed principle a second identity not just as a god but as "the life of the gods" (*devā́nām… ásuḥ*). The last verse finally attaches a name to the unnamed principle, but this verse is a later addition (Oldenberg 1888: 248), reflecting a redactional effort not to leave the mystery of this principle unresolved. In that verse the deity is revealed to be Prajāpati, the "Lord of Creatures," who in the Brāhmaṇas is both the creator god and the archetype of the sacrifice. Later tradition confirms the identity of this principle by understanding the constantly repeated *ká* "who?" to be a name of Prajāpati. Accordingly the Anukramaṇī designates Ka as the deity of this hymn.

In a very perceptive interpretation of the hymn Proferes (2007: 140–41) shows the relation of this hymn to the ideology of kingship. In the royal unction ritual the king is reborn by means of the unction waters as a being with the power and brilliance of the sun. This hymn reproduces the elements of that rite: the conception of an embryo

(vss. 1, 7) and a ruler (vss. 1, 2, 3), the waters (vss. 7, 8, 9) that bear an embryo (vs. 7), and the birth of fire (vs. 7). The unnamed principle encompasses the entire world (vss. 4, 5, 10), and its power extends in every direction (vs. 4) and over every being (vss. 2, 3, 8), as the king (ideally) is the master of the world, whose power extends everywhere. Likewise, the unnamed principle supports the world—making it firm (vs. 5) and steady (vss. 5, 6)—and gives it life (vss. 2, 7), as the king maintains and preserves the world.

Structurally, the hymn is organized as an almost unbroken series of dependent clauses. The first series of relative clauses, hanging off the main clauses in verse 1, lasts from verses 2 through 6. Verse 7 then re-establishes the pattern, for it has a main clause, on which the relative clauses in verse 8 depend. The phrase "he alone existed" in verses 1b and 8c create a ring, which defines the boundaries of the main body of the hymn. Outside this ring and outside the main body of the hymn, verse 9 repeats in miniature the pattern of preceding verses. It has a main clause in 9a, which is followed by three more relative clauses and concluded by the refrain. The verse is an appeal to the unnamed deity to do no harm, making it also thematically distinct from the main body of the hymn. Like verse 10, it too may have been a later addition, as Thieme (1964: 69) has asserted.

1. The golden embryo evolved in the beginning. Born the lord of what came to be, he alone existed.
   He supports the earth and the heaven here— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
2. Who is the giver of breath, the giver of strength; whose command all honor, whose command the gods honor;
   whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
3. Who became king of the breathing, blinking, moving world—just he alone by his greatness;
   who is lord of the two-footed and four-footed creatures here— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
4. Whose are these snow-covered mountains [=the Himalayas] in their greatness; whose is the sea together with the world-stream, they say;
   whose are these directions, whose (their) two arms [=the zenith and nadir?]— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
5. By whom the mighty heaven and earth were made firm; by whom the sun was steadied, by whom the firmament;
   who was the one measuring out the airy realm in the midspace— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
6. Toward whom the two battle lines [=heaven and earth] looked, steadied with his help, though trembling in mind,
   (those) upon which the risen sun radiates. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?

7. When the lofty waters came, receiving everything as an embryo and giving birth to the fire,
 then the life of the gods evolved alone— – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
8. Who by his greatness surveyed the waters receiving (ritual) skill (as an embryo) and giving birth to the sacrifice;
 who, the god over gods, alone existed. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
9. Let him not do us harm—he who is the progenitor of earth or who, with foundations that are real, engendered heaven,
 and who engendered the gleaming, lofty waters. – Who is the god to whom we should do homage with our oblation?
10. O Prajāpati! No one other than you has encompassed all these things that have been born.
 Let what we desire as we make oblation to you be ours. We would be lords of riches.

X.122 (948) Agni

Citramahas Vāsiṣṭha
8 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 1, 5

Attributed to a Vasiṣṭhid by the Anukramaṇī, this hymn ends (vs. 8) with a mention of the Vasiṣṭhas and with the Vasiṣṭha refrain from Maṇḍala VII. It is a fairly standard praise of Agni, deploying a wide range of his standard epithets and ritual roles and titles. The ritual is the complete focus of the hymn, and the rewards that the sacrificer will receive from properly performing it and serving Agni are also at the forefront. There is much recycling of vocabulary.

1. Him, of brilliant might like a Vasu, will I hymn—the precious, kindly guest, not to be despised.
 He will bestow all-nourishing riches—Agni the Hotar, the Houselord— and an abundance of heroes.
2. Taking pleasure, Agni, delight in my speech, knowing all the (ritual) patterns, o very effective one.
 You with your cloak of ghee—set the course for the sacred formulation. Following your commandment the gods begot (it).
3. As you, the immortal, circle the seven domains, as you do pious work for the pious, be generous to the one who performs (rituals) well
 with wealth rich in heroes ready to hand, o Agni. Whoever has reached toward you with a kindling stick, take pleasure in him.

4. The beacon of the sacrifice, the foremost one set in front do the seven (priests) offering oblations reverently invoke as prizewinner—
   Agni who hears them, the bull with ghee on his back, the god who gives to the giver an abundance of heroes.
5. You are the foremost messenger, worthy to be chosen. Being summoned for immortal (soma?), become exhilarated (on it).
   You did the Maruts groom in the house of the pious; you did the Bhr̥gus illuminate with praises.
6. In milking all-nourishing refreshment out of the good milker for the sacrificer who is pleasing to the sacrifice, o very effective one,
   and in making the circuit three times around the truths, around the sacrifice, while shining ghee-backed, o Agni, you well display your effective power.
7. Just to you, at the brightenings of this dawn, did the sons of Manu perform sacrifice, on making you their messenger.
   You have the gods strengthened to be magnified, rubbing melted butter down (on your body) at the ceremony, o Agni.
8. The Vasiṣṭhas have called you down, the prizewinner, as they hymn you, o Agni—the ritual adepts at the rites.
   Uphold among the sacrificers the thriving of wealth. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

X.123 (949) Vena

Vena Bhārgava
8 verses: triṣṭubh

A famous and mystical hymn, whose opacity still defies complete comprehension although its main features are clear. The subject is announced in the first words of the first verse: "this Seeker" (*ayám vénaḥ*), and the Anukramaṇī also attributes the hymn to the same figure, or his multiform: Vena Bhārgava. This poet is also credited with the soma hymn IX.85 by the Anukramaṇī, and the last four verses of that hymn (9–12), which contain phraseology quite similar to X.123 and which we might term "Vena without Tears," help clarify X.123. What is at issue is the common identification of Soma and the Sun, united in the Seeker figure, who is also identified as a Gandharva (vss. 4 and 7) and as a bird (vss. 5–6). Most verses are applicable to either Soma or the Sun, and, as is common in hymns with such dual referents, the effort of fashioning phraseology that works for both referents accounts for many of the enigmas in the hymn, beginning with the birth and first appearance of the Seeker in verses 1–2.

It is noteworthy that the Seeker is also eagerly sought: the inspired poets pursue him (vss. 1, 4, probably 6), as do women seeking a husband (vs. 2) and mothers (vs.

3)—both feminine references probably standing for the hymns produced by these poets. Needless to say, both Soma and the Sun are regularly the object of such poetic attentions, and the intimate bond between poets and what they celebrate is a prominent theme in the hymn.

Less prominent, but perhaps not less important, is the theme of name-and-form. This first surfaces explicitly in verse 4, where it is their recognition of the form of the Seeker that inspires the poets' longing for him. In the same verse the Seeker, as Gandharva, finds "the immortal names." Later, in verse 7, this same Gandharva engenders his own names. These verses seem to adumbrate the later preoccupation with name and form as representing the creation of the multiplicity of objects in the world by the division of the formless into "forms" and the assignment of "names" to each in order to differentiate them. This theme is treated with great skill and subtlety also in III.38. In this hymn here the Gandharva's engendering his own names in the penultimate verse of the hymn leads to a climax of sorts in the final verse (8), though one that is quite downplayed. In that final verse the undifferentiated figure of Soma/Sun is actually divided into its two constituent parts, though neither is mentioned by name. The first half of the verse concerns the drop (*drapsá*), a word regularly used of Soma, while the second half has as its subject *bhānú* "radiance," which is especially characteristic of the Sun. Through the power of the poets' perception of the true "form" of things and their ability to assign them "names," Sun and Soma emerge at the end of the hymn as separate, though mutually dependent, entities.

1. This Seeker here spurs on those females whose embryo is the dappled one—he whose afterbirth is light—in the measuring out of the airy realm.
   At the union of the waters and the sun, the inspired poets lick him with their thoughts like an infant (calf).
2. The Seeker raises up a wave from the sea. The cloud-born one, the top of the delightful one has been sighted,
   as the glint on the back of truth, on its upper surface. (All) the "brides-to-be" have roared toward the same womb.
3. The mothers of the calf, who are many though stemming from the same nest, stand there bellowing [/yearning] toward the same (womb).
   Having stridden onto the back of truth, the voices lick at the immortal honey.
4. Recognizing his form, the inspired poets longed (for him). Because they came toward the cry of the wild buffalo,
   approaching with truth they mounted onto the stream. The Gandharva found the immortal names.
5. The Apsaras, the maiden smiling coyly at her lover, bears him in the highest distant heaven.
   He roamed among the wombs of the dear one [masc.], himself being dear; he sat on a golden wing—he is the Seeker—

6. When they, seeking with their heart, gazed upon you, an eagle flying to the vault,
   the golden-winged messenger of Varuṇa, the (omen-)bird fluttering in the womb of Yama.
7. The Gandharva stood erect upon the vault, facing outward, bearing his dazzling weapons;
   wearing a fragrant cloak, (lovely) to be seen like the sun, he engendered his own dear names.
8. When the (soma-)drop goes to the sea, seeing with the eye of a vulture in the spreading expanse,
   the (sun's) radiance with its bright blaze, finding pleasure (in it [=drop]), has created its own dear (names) in the third realm.

X.124 (950) Various Gods

Agni (2–4), Agni, Varuṇa, and Soma (1, 5–9)
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 7

SWJ

This dialogue hymn may be one of the most discussed poems in the R̥gveda, and the number, variety, and contradictory nature of its interpretations are truly astounding—far too many and too diverse to be summed up here. (For a brief characterization of many of these treatments see W. E. Hale [1986: 86–92], and for a recent and intriguing interpretation see Proferes [2007: 121–27].)

The hymn begins with an address to Agni by Indra (vs. 1); Agni answers in verse 2 and, in many interpretations, continues to speak in verses 3 and 4—though I follow the opinion that Varuṇa and Soma are the speakers of those two verses. Indra returns as speaker in verses 5 and 6, addressed to Varuṇa and Soma respectively. The last four verses (7–10) appear to be the words of the poet.

In his speech Indra is attempting to coax the other gods addressed to join him in his new sacrifice, leaving behind their old ways and their old kin group. The gods need little persuasion. After Indra promises to make him the oblation-bearer in verse 1, Agni agrees with alacrity to go "as a god, from the non-god" and "from my own fellowship to an alien lineage" (vs. 2). In verse 3 Varuṇa (if he is the speaker; otherwise Agni again) echoes this proposed journey, in the expression "I go from the non-sacrificial to the sacrificial portion," while in verse 4 Soma (again, if he is the speaker) "chooses Indra" and "leaves the father," ending the verse with the ringing declaration: "the kingship has made a revolution."

Thus the subject of the hymn seems to be nothing less than a radical political and religious reconfiguration, with shifting alliances leading to a fundamental

realignment of the major divinities and to a new sacrificial order and a new rule. What has intensified the scholarly debate about this hymn is the assumed identity of the losing side. In verse 3 we find "Father Asura" (or "the lordly father"), presumably the same father that Soma leaves after choosing Indra in verse 4. In verse 5 Indra asserts that the Asuras (or "lords") have lost their *māyā* or "magic powers," while the first divinity to leave, Agni, begins verse 2 with the emphatic *ádevād deváḥ* "from a non-god (I) a god..." It has thus been difficult not to consider this hymn in the context of the vexing question about the Asura–Deva rivalry so prominent in Vedic prose, mirrored in the Avestan Ahura–Daēuua split, but complicated by the R̥gveda, which shows almost no signs of such a rivalry or even of a defined group of Asuras distinct from the Devas. Despite these R̥gvedic lacunae it was still tempting to see in this hymn a depiction of the overthrow of the Asuras by the Devas and a number of scholars have done so, although there are important counterindications—not least the passage just cited where Agni asserts his identity as a god even as he is leaving his own kin-group, supposedly the Asuras.

I will not pursue this particular question further, for want of space (and a disinclination to engage in a debate unlikely ever to be satisfactorily resolved). I will, however, point out a striking feature of the hymn that seems not to have been sufficiently noted. Whoever the two opposing parties in this revolution were, the power shift from one to the other was remarkably peaceful, especially for the R̥gveda, where most conflicts have violence as their defining characteristic. This peacefulness is emphasized throughout the hymn. Agni refers to the non-god he left as "being kindly disposed" (*śivá*), apologetically describing himself as "unkind" (*áśiva*) in leaving (vs. 2c). Varuṇa seems to counter this in verse 3c by proclaiming to Father Asura that Agni was indeed kind (*śéva*) (in my interpretation: this pāda has been variously interpreted). In verse 7 Varuṇa is said to have released the waters "without an excess of power," and the waters thus released "make peace with each other." In verse 8 Indra "dwells peacefully" amid his subjects. The only violence in the hymn is prospective: the smashing of Vr̥tra foreseen by Indra in verse 6, once Soma has allied himself with Indra. The hymn is all about negotiation and a sort of sacrificial horse-trading: see Indra's offers of important roles to Agni (1c), Varuṇa (5d), and Soma (6d). Indra even begs Varuṇa to "love" him (5b). The principal figures "choose" their side and their ruler (Soma in 4b and even the female rivers in 8b) and make their own moves, as emphasized by the repeated verbs of motion ("come!" 1a; "going... I go,... I leave,... I go" 2; "I go" 3d; "I leave... they bestir themselves... (I) coming here" 4; "come!" 5d; "come forth!" 6c). The peaceful and voluntary nature of the change in alliances—the lack of retaliation by the deserted side, the lack of interest in pursuing their advantage and crushing their opponents by the winning side—distinguishes this episode not only from almost every other such situation in the R̥gveda but also from the perpetual conflict and reflexive hostility between Asuras and Devas in middle Vedic literature—an indication, perhaps, that that rivalry is not the context in which to interpret this hymn.

Although, given the apparent failure of so many R̥gvedic interpreters to identify the deserted party successfully, it is foolhardy to suggest my own candidate, I will make an unemphatic essay in that direction. Note first that the figure most clearly left behind by the deserting gods is a "father"—qualified once as Father Asura/lordly father (3c), once just as father (4b). Note also the first half of verse 6, where Indra points to the sun and its previous preeminence on the scale of value, but suggests that it is now eclipsed or rivaled by the light of the broad midspace. Let us also remember the heads of the pantheons in Greek and Roman mythology, Zeus Patēr and Iuppiter respectively, and the curious fact that the cognate figure in ancient India, formulaically transparent Dyaus *Pitar* "*Father* Sky/Heaven," has no comparable prominence in Vedic mythology though he is reasonably well attested in the texts. On putting these clues together, it seems possible that the old sky-centered religion focused on the inherited paternal divinity Dyaus quietly gave way to one located in realms closer to men, where divinities concerned themselves with issues important to mankind, such as the release of the waters (vss. 7–8), and actively sought the praise and sacrificial offerings of men (vs. 9 and, by implication, throughout the hymn). Dyaus Pitar remained a revered figure but played little role in the sacrificial system. There was thus no violent rupture in the social or religious fabric, just a peaceful fading into well-but-perfunctorily-honored irrelevance for Dyaus, displaced by ritual-centered gods like Agni and Soma and those deeply involved with men's affairs, ethically (Varuṇa) or martially (Indra).

JPB

In the introduction above, SWJ expresses well-considered doubt about the possibility of ever resolving the interpretive difficulties of this hymn. In trying once again to understand the narrative and situation behind it, I know I risk adding yet another not quite convincing interpretation to an already large stack of not quite convincing interpretations. But this hymn is difficult to avoid, because it is central to one of the more intriguing questions of Vedic religious history: When and how does the story of the conflict of Devas and Asuras develop? There is little possible evidence and still less likely evidence in the R̥gveda for this narrative staple of the later Vedic and classical traditions. We have pointed out several passages that might reflect it, but even these are not certain (see, for example, X.53.4 and 157.4). However, as my colleague pointed out above, a number of scholars have cited X.124 not only as evidence for the definition of the Asuras as a group of deities distinct from and in opposition to Devas but also as evidence—the *only* evidence—for an elaborate narrative in which former Asuras shift to the side of the Devas (see, for example, Brown 1919: 100, Kuiper 1975, Oberlies 1998: 391).

In Brereton (forthcoming b), I have proposed a different approach to the hymn. I try to show that this hymn asserts a human claim of succession after the death of a previous ruler. The hymn is indeed a dialogue, but I identify the speakers differently

from their assignment below. Verse 1, I believe, is not in the voice of Indra, but in that of the sacrificer, in whose rite the hymn was recited. The first three pādas are a fairly standard invitation to Agni to come to the sacrifice. It is only in the last pāda that the verse takes an unexpected turn: "For a long time," it states, Agni has "lain in long darkness." That is to say, the ritual fire has been extinguished. The later Veda prescribes that the ritual fire be extinguished at the death of a sacrificer, and therefore at least one possibility is that this summons to Agni is a summons to return after such a death. Verse 2 is Agni's response: he has departed from one who was a mortal, a "non-god," but he now returns to his new life as the sacrificial fire of a living sacrificer. In verse 3 the new sacrificer welcomes Agni, who previously was the guest of the old sacrificer, to the "many domains of truth," the places where the new sacrificer has now installed the sacrificial fires. The sacrificer then proclaims a kindness for his "lordly father," the deceased sacrificer, thus identifying the old sacrificer as both his own father and a "lord," a ruler. The kindness he offers is the continuation of his father's ritual performance, which will guarantee his father's life in the realm of the ancestors, and in this way he converts Agni's "unkindness" in deserting his father to an act of kindness. In verse 4 Agni once again speaks. For many years he acted "within it"—if *antár asmin* refers to the sacrifice obliquely mentioned in verse 3—or "within him," within the sphere or authority of the old sacrificer. But now Agni chooses "Indra." As in IV.42, the coronation hymn of King Trasadasyu, "Indra" here is the new king. "The kingship has made a revolution," Agni declares, for there is a new king, and Agni promises to do what he can to help in the institution of that king's rule. To this the new sacrificer and king replies, now addressing Varuṇa, who has been made present by Agni. He says that rival lords lack the ability to rule, and therefore Varuṇa should come and govern with him and in support of him.

In my view the dialogue ends with verse 5. In verse 6 the sacrificer and new king makes a final declaration, in which he explicitly identifies himself with Indra, here by assuming Indra's most characteristic deed, the destruction of Vr̥tra. The final three verses are in the voice of the priestly narrator. In verse 7 he identifies the new king with Varuṇa by attributing to him the deeds of Varuṇa, and in verse 8 the new king once again becomes Indra. Finally in verse 9 the sage poets "discern" Indra. And where do they discern him? In the king, who acts in accordance with the praise that follows him!

Thus, the hymn parallels IV.42, in which Trasadasyu acts as both Varuṇa and Indra in peace and in war. Unlike Trasadasyu, however, the claimant here seems to have had opposition, which would have made the ritual affirmation of his rule all the more essential. In this interpretation, *ásura* "lord" or "lordly" dissolves as a designation for a group of gods. In its two occurrences, in the singular in verse 3 and in the plural in verse 5, *ásura* refers to human lords, not to gods or antigods or old gods. And not only does it refer to humans, but also to quite different humans: in verse 3 to the predecessor of the sacrificer and in verse 5 to the sacrificer's enemies or rivals.

1. [Indra:] Come right up to this sacrifice of ours here, Agni, with its five
   tracks, three circles, seven threads.

You will be our oblation-carrier and the one who goes in front of us. For a long time indeed you have lain in long darkness.

2. [Agni:] Going in concealment and hiding, I go, as a god, from the non-god, foreseeing immortality for myself.
   When I unkindly leave (him), though he is kindly disposed, from my own fellowship I go to an alien lineage.
3. [Varuṇa:] Seeing (him [=Agni]) as the guest of the other branch, I measure out the many domains of truth.
   I proclaim (him [=Agni]) as kindly to the lordly father [/Father Asura]. From the one without sacrifice I go to a sacrificial portion.
4. [Soma:] I have "done" many years within him. (Now) choosing Indra, I leave the father.
   Agni, Soma, Varuṇa—they bestir themselves. The kingship has made a revolution; I help it (along), by coming here.
5. [Indra:] These lords [/Asuras] have lost their magic powers. And if you, Varuṇa, will love me,
   sifting untruth out from truth, o king, come here to the overlordship of my kingdom.
6. [Indra:] Here is the sun—it alone used to be the thing of value. (But now) there is this coming to light—the broad midspace.
   Let us two smash Vr̥tra—come forth, Soma. We shall sacrifice to you with an oblation, though you yourself are an oblation.
7. The poet with his poetic craft has fastened the form (of the sun?) in heaven. Without excess of power Varuṇa released the waters.
   Making peace with each other like (co)wives, the rivers, (though) clear, each variously bear his color.
8. They follow his preeminent Indrian power. He dwells peacefully among them who delight in their independent power.
   They, on choosing him as clans choose a king, recoiling turned away from Vr̥tra.
9. They say that a goose is the yokemate of those who recoiled, a goose roaming in the fellowship of the heavenly waters.
   The one roaming hither and yon in pursuit of the verse of praise have the sage poets discerned to be Indra through their inspired thought.

X.125 (951) Speech

Vāc Āmbhr̥ṇa
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 2

Another very famous hymn, to the goddess Speech (Vāc), it is couched as an ātmastuti or "self-praise," and this aspect is certainly quite insistent. The 1st-person speaker uses the word "I" (*ahám*) fifteen times (not counting other cases

of this pronoun), along with numerous 1st-person present-tense verbs. With the fame of the hymn comes a certain carelessness on the part of its many translators, who have tended to smooth out the rough and puzzling places. See, for example, verse 3d, where a more fluent and expected expression might be "I have many stations and enter many things" (compare Doniger O'Flaherty's "I dwell in many places and enter into many forms" and Maurer's "with many a place and entering upon many a form"), but the undoubted causative verb form in the second phrase makes that easy rendering impossible. The praises that Speech heaps upon herself are not necessarily for the things that we expect her to boast about, and as translators and interpreters we must follow the lead of her own grammatical choices.

She begins by asserting her companionship with, indeed her support for, the primary gods and groups thereof (vss. 1–2), as well as for the mortal sacrificer. In verse 3 she sounds the common theme of the divisions of speech, though not in the usual way; in the phrase noted above (3d), she asserts that not only is she found in many places—that is, she has been much subdivided—but that many things enter her—that is, she also encompasses the many entities that make up the world. These contrastive, mirrored images are part of her totalizing project.

Verse 4 and 5 are the center of the hymn and its crux, defined as an omphalos by the framing forms of *ā́-√viś* "enter" in 3d and 6d and by the repeated *vadāmi* "I speak / tell" of 4d and 5a. In the first three pādas of verse 4 she depicts speech as that on which the other operations of life depend, but in a curiously oblique way—not through speech directly but through eating. She identifies eating as the central operation and herself as the instrument and facilitator of eating ("through me he eats food"), with the other senses ("who sees, who breathes, who hears . . . ") dependent on the eating. (Other translators tend to elide the distinction between the main clause "he eats food" and the subordinate clauses "who sees," etc., but the contrast is too marked to ignore.) What can she mean by this odd statement? If we are right, (at least) two different things. On the one hand, she is laying claim to the mouth, the organ that engages in both eating and speaking. The other sense organs—eyes (sight), nose (breathing), ears (hearing)—are not involved with either operation. Eating is essential to life: one can't see, breathe, or hear without being alive, which requires food, and so, by their joint location in the mouth, Speech can assert her primary role in eating and thus in staying alive. By this argument, all other sense activities depend on Speech. But we think there is also another, more pointed message here, about the poet, whom she is about to address. The poet makes his livelihood ("eats his food") by producing poetic speech from the inspiration of the goddess Speech, and his sense activity, including the ways in which he receives inspiration, by seeing and hearing especially, as well as his life depends on her.

In the final pāda of verse 4 she addresses the poet directly, with a tour de force of phonological play, much remarked upon in scholarly literature: *śrudhí śruta śraddhivám̐ te vadāmi* "Listen, o you who are listened to: it's a trustworthy thing

I tell you." The poet is the one who is "listened to" in the world: his verbal products have a privileged status, and she makes him a conduit of her own message. In the following verse (5) she explains how she chooses and anoints her choice as poet and what qualities she invests him with.

After the omphalos verses she returns (vss. 6–8) to a more general and wider focus, asserting her pervasion of Heaven and Earth, indeed of all the worlds, both horizontally and vertically, and even beyond them. Quite striking, and also superficially unclear, is her statement in verse 7a, literally "I give birth to the/a father on his head" (*ahám̐ suve pitáram asya mūrdhán*). In contrast to most interpretations of this statement, we interpret it in light of a common use of the phrase "the head of heaven" in the R̥gveda as an epithet for Agni (e.g., III.2.14 *agním mūrdhā́nam̐ diváḥ*). The father is "Father Heaven" (Dyaus Pitar), but "his head" is then actually a reference to fire, most particularly the ritual fire in its deified form Agni. If we are correct, Vāc is returning to the notion of sacrificial speech found earlier in the hymn, implying that speech produced on the ritual ground beside the sacrificial fire in a sense creates and sustains the cosmos. From this restricted space, namely the locus of the sacrifice, speech spreads across all realms and up to heaven. (Under this interpretation, the womb in the waters of 7b could refer to the waters of the soma sacrifice, though this is not necessary.)

In sum, our version of a beloved hymn to a beloved goddess is stranger and perhaps less lovable than its usual interpretations, but also reflects the crafty indirection of the goddess herself.

1. I roam with the Rudras and the Vasus, I with the Ādityas and the
   All Gods.
   I bear both Mitra and Varuṇa, I Indra and Agni, I both the Aśvins.
2. I bear the swollen soma, I Tvaṣṭar and Pūṣan and Bhaga.
   I establish wealth for the man offering the oblation, who pursues (his
   ritual duties) well, who sacrifices and presses.
3. I am ruler, assembler of goods, observer foremost among those deserving
   the sacrifice.
   Me have the gods distributed in many places—so that I have many
   stations and cause many things to enter (me).
4. Through me he eats food—whoever sees, whoever breathes, whoever
   hears what is spoken.
   Without thinking about it, they live on me. Listen, o you who are
   listened to: it's a trustworthy thing I tell you.
5. Just I myself say this, savored by gods and men:
   "Whom I love, just him I make formidable, him a formulator, him a seer,
   him of good wisdom."
6. I stretch the bow for Rudra, for his arrow to smash the hater of the
   sacred formulation.
   I make combat for the people. I have entered Heaven and Earth.

7. I give birth to Father (Heaven?) on his (own?) head [=Agni?]; my womb is in the waters, in the sea.
   Thence I spread forth across all worlds, and yonder heaven with its height I touch.
8. I, just like the wind, blow forth, grasping at all worlds,
   beyond heaven, beyond this earth here—of such size in my greatness have I come into being.

X.126 (952) All Gods

Kulmalabarhiṣa Śailūṣi or Aṃhomuc Vāmadevya
8 verses: upariṣṭādbr̥hatī, except triṣṭubh 8

A simple hymn whose contents are shaped in great part by its meter. The first seven verses are in upariṣṭādbr̥hatī, technically 8 8 8 12. But the last four syllables of the final pāda are a refrain, "beyond hatreds" (*áti dvíṣaḥ*), giving the impression of an anuṣṭubh verse (8 8 8 8) with a decorative flourish at the end. The principal dedicands of the hymn are the Ādityas, or rather the trio Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. These appear in scrambled order in verse 1cd, but for the rest of the upariṣṭādbr̥hatī verses (2–7) occupy the entire second pāda in fixed order. This punctuation of each verse with two fixed phrases, each at the end of its hemistich, subordinates the message of each verse to its structure. Fortunately the message is elementary: the gods in question should lead us out of difficulties and to shelter and safety.

A few other gods appear in the hymn: Rudra with the Maruts, and Indra and Agni in verse 5, and Agni in the appended and metrically distinct final verse (8), but their presence barely registers in the very Ādityan atmosphere.

1. O gods, neither narrow straits nor difficult passage reach that mortal
   whom Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa lead of one accord—beyond hatreds.
2. For we choose that—o Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   by which you rescue a mortal from narrow straits and lead him—beyond hatreds.
3. They are here to aid us now—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   the best leaders in leading us and the best deliverers in delivering us—beyond hatreds.
4. You protect everyone all around—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   May we be in the dear shelter of you, o you of good guidance—beyond hatreds.
5. The Ādityas (lead) beyond failures—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman.
   We would call on powerful Rudra along with the Maruts, on Indra and Agni, for well-being—beyond hatreds.

6. They are our leaders across—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   beyond all difficult passages—the kings of the settled domains—beyond hatreds.
7. Let them extend blessing to us to aid us—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman—
   and broad shelter—the Ādityas, when we implore them—beyond hatreds.
8. Just as then you released the buffalo-cow bound by the foot, you good ones worthy of the sacrifice,
   so release constraint from us. (Let) our lifetime be further lengthened, o Agni.

X.127 (953) Night

Kuśika Saubhara or Rātri Bhāradvājī
8 verses: gāyatrī

In contrast to the numerous hymns dedicated to the lovely and welcome Dawn, Night is barely celebrated in the Ṛgveda, only in this one hymn. The night described here is not that of the frightening and formless darkness so often mentioned in the text, but rather starry night, who has beauties of her own. In fact, she is described in places (see vss. 2 and 3c especially) with phraseology more appropriate to Dawn, whose own advent is anticipated in verse 7.

1. Goddess Night, while coming hither, has looked about in many places with her eyes.
   She has laid on herself all beauties.
2. The immortal goddess has filled the broad (midspace), its depths and heights;
   with light she repels the darkness.
3. She has expelled her sister, Dawn—she, the goddess, while coming hither—
   and darkness will race away.
4. (Be) here for us today—you at whose journey we have settled down,
   like birds on their nest in the tree.
5. Down have settled the roving bands, down the footed, down the winged,
   down even the falcons in their busyness.
6. Keep away the she-wolf and the wolf; keep away the thief, o Night.
   But for us become easy to traverse.
7. Darkness, fully ornamented, black, smeared all over (with stars), has approached me.
   O Dawn, settle it like debts.
8. Right up to you have I driven (this hymn), like cows (to their pen). Choose it, o Daughter of Heaven,
   o Night—like a praise song for a victor.

X.128 (954) All Gods

Vihavya Āṅgirasa
9 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 9

Anxiety about rival sacrifices, a common preoccupation of the R̥gveda, begins and informs this hymn. The first two verses situate the performance of the hymn "at the competing invocation(s)" (*vihavá*, a derivative of which provides the poet's name, Vihavya, in the Anukramaṇī)—a moment when sacrificers all over the Ārya lands are inviting the same gods to their own separate sacrifices. The poet urges his own case with a series of emphatic fronted 1st-person singular pronominal forms ("mine," "to me," etc.) in the first four verses. The potential competing sacrificers in these early verses are transformed into even more threatening figures as the hymn progress—haters (vs. 5), violent challengers in battle (vs. 6), rivals (vs. 9). The poet then asks for the aid of the gods in repulsing them and in protecting him.

The grammar and diction of the hymn are straightforward and spring no surprises.

1. Mine be the luster at the competing invocations, o Agni. Might we thrive in our body as we kindle you in your body.
   To me let the four quarters bow. With you as our overseer might we win battles.
2. Mine be all the gods at the competing invocation: the Maruts together with Indra, Viṣṇu, and Agni.
   Mine be the midspace, providing a broad place. For me, at my desire, let the wind purify itself [=blow].
3. To me let the gods bring material wealth through sacrifice. In me be the prayer; in me the invocation to the gods.
   The ancient divine Hotars acted with zeal. Might we be free from harm in our body and possessed of good heroes.
4. For me let them sacrifice (with) the oblations that are mine. Let the purpose of my mind come true.
   Let me not fall into any kind of offense. All you gods, speak for us!
5. You six broad goddesses, create broad (space) for us. All you gods, act as heroes here.
   May we not be bereft of offspring, nor of our own bodies. May we not become subject to him who hates us, o King Soma.
6. O Agni, repulsing the battle fury of the others [=the enemy], as an undeceivable herdsman, protect us on every side.
   Let the challengers bearing down turn back: at home their intention will disappear when they awaken.
7. He who is the Ordainer of Ordainers, the lord of creation—him, the god Rescuer, who vanquishes hostility (do I invoke).

Let both the Aśvins and Bṛhaspati (protect) this sacrifice here; let the gods protect the sacrificer from failure.

8. The buffalo of broad expanse will offer shelter to us at this invocation— he who is invoked by many, who provides many cattle.
   Show mercy to our offspring, o you of the fallow bays. Do not harm us nor hand us over.
9. Whoever are our rivals, let them keep away: with Indra and Agni we will thrust them down.
   The Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas have made me one who touches on high, a formidable observer, an over-king.

X.129 (955) Creation

Prajāpati Parameṣṭhin
7 verses: triṣṭubh

This is one of the most famous hymns of the Ṛgveda, and one of the most significant for later Indian cosmogonies. Because it is elusive and suggestive rather than directly narrative, it has given rise to a wide variety of interpretations. The interpretation we offer here follows the more extensive discussion in Brereton (1999), which also refers to earlier literature and alternate interpretations.

If this is a cosmogonic hymn, it is certainly a strange one, because the last verse does not come to a conclusion but ends with a question. This incompleteness is formally marked by both metrical and syntactic irregularities. The meter of verse 7b is two syllables short, leaving the its hearers to anticipate two beats that are not there, and the syntax of 7d is incomplete since the poem ends with a relative clause without a main clause. A close look at the rest of the hymn explains the reason for these poetic strategies.

In verse 1 there is a progression from negations—what existed was neither existing nor nonexisting and neither space nor heaven existed—to questions (1c) to possibilities (1d). Verse 2 also begins with negation, here the negation of death, deathlessness, and the signs of night and day. The only narrative progress is the greater specificity in verse 2 about what is negated: there are no mortals or immortals, there is no moon or sun. But whereas 1cd continued with questions and possibilities, 2cd provides an answer to the question of what existed: there existed "that One," which "breathed without wind." In 1c the poet asked what "stirred," or more literally what "moved back and forth," and in 2c the implicit answer is that the "breathing" of the One moves back and forth. If 2c answers the question of 1c and indeed if verse 2 defines what verse 1 suggests, then "that One" in verse 2 is the previously undefined thing that was neither existent nor nonexistent in verse 1.

Verse 3 sharpens the sense that nothing is happening, nothing material at least. It apparently starts over once again: 3a ends "in the beginning" (*ágre*) just as 1a ends

"at that time" (*tadā́nīm*) and 2a "then" (*tárhi*). But where verses 1 and 2 asked questions or only hinted at answers, 3a asserts that there was something, namely "darkness" covered by darkness, and 3c describes a "thing coming into being" (*ābhú)* covered by "emptiness." In verse 3, therefore, "that One" still does not have substance, but it is beginning to have shape, since there is something that is "covered" by something. As Thieme (1964: 66–67) has observed, that shape is the shape of an egg, and it is this egg-like shape that in 3d "was born" or hatched through heat.

Thus far there has been little development of substance, although there has been an evolution of concept. An unidentified subject that neither exists nor does not exist is introduced in verse 1. It has taken conceptual form as the "One" in verse 2, and finally assumed an egg-like shape in verse 3. In verse 4 there is a shift that apparently breaks the continuity of the hymn. According to 4ab, thought gives rise to desire, which is concretized as the "primal semen," the origin of beings. However, there is one thing that connects verses 3 and 4 and maintains the hymn's continuity: "desire" in 4a corresponds to "heat" in 3d. If so, then "thought" in 4b should correspond to the "One" in 3d. And so it does, for "thought" is the hidden metaphor in verses 1–3. In verse 1 it is thought that neither exists nor does not exist, because thought is something real but at the same time something not real, since it is not externally perceptible. Or, to put it another way, thought has shape but no substance, as verse 3 says. This hymn, therefore, shows an omphalos structure, in which the middle verse, in this case verse 4, contains the key to the hymn. Here that key is the revelation that thought is the One, which is the ultimate source of creation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the "connection" (*bándhu*) between "existing" and "not-existing," the connection that is thought, was discovered by poets "though inspired thinking" (*manīṣā́*, 4d). In verse 5 this "connection" also becomes a dividing "cord" (*raśmí*) and through it there emerges the distinction between males (the placers of semen and the offering) and females ("greatnesses," i.e., pregnancies, and independent will).

But even if thought is the ultimate and primal creative act, the origin of the world is still unknown, even by the gods (vs. 6c). If there is an overseer of the world, he might know, or he might not (vs. 7cd). The lack of an answer means that "thinking" will not come to an end. The poem ends with metrical and syntactic irresolution and with a question in order that its hearers are left thinking and in that way left repeating the fundamental act of creation, the act of thinking.

1. The nonexistent did not exist, nor did the existent exist at that time.
   There existed neither the airy space nor heaven beyond.
   What moved back and forth? From where and in whose protection? Did water exist, a deep depth?
2. Death did not exist nor deathlessness then. There existed no sign of night nor of day.
   That One breathed without wind by its independent will. There existed nothing else beyond that.

3. Darkness existed, hidden by darkness, in the beginning. All this was a signless ocean.
   What existed as a thing coming into being, concealed by emptiness—that One was born by the power of heat.
4. Then, in the beginning, from thought there evolved desire, which existed as the primal semen.
   Searching in their hearts through inspired thought, poets found the connection of the existent in the nonexistent.
5. Their cord was stretched across: Did something exist below it? Did something exist above?
   There existed placers of semen and there existed greatnesses. There was independent will below, offering above.
6. Who really knows? Who shall here proclaim it?—from where was it born, from where this creation?
   The gods are on this side of the creation of this (world). So then who does know from where it came to be?
7. This creation—from where it came to be, if it was produced or if not—
   he who is the overseer of this (world) in the furthest heaven, he surely knows. Or if he does not know…?

X.130 (956) Creation of the Sacrifice

Yajña Prājāpatya
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1

In its first three verses the hymn depicts the creation of the acts of the sacrifice through the image of weaving. The form of the sacrifice was instituted by the gods (vss. 1, 3) and first carried out by the "fathers," the ancient seers who were the ancestors of the current priests (vs. 6). Indeed, these fathers are at the present rite as well (1cd). In verse 2 it becomes complicated because it is difficult to know who the actors are. In 2ab the subject may not be "a man," but "the Man," a figure similar to the Puruṣa of X.90. That is how Sāyaṇa and others have understood it. But it might also refer simply to "a man" in the sense of "a human" and imply that humans have taken up the weaving of the gods and ancestors, and in doing so their activity reaches to heaven. Again in 2cd it is not clear who "they" are who have sat down to weave the sacrifice. They might be the fathers after 1cd, the human priests in continuation of 2ab, or the gods in anticipation of verse 3. Since any of these could have been so described, the ambiguity may be intentional.

Verse 3ab completes the weaving image, although the terminology reflects the ritual as much as it does weaving. The "model" and "image" could be for a woven cloth or a ritual performance. The *nidā́na*, a "connection" or a "rope," might fit weaving but does not fit the ritual very well. Since according to X.114.2 poets are

able to see the hidden "connection," in a ritual context it may describe knowledge that a priest has. On the other hand "melted butter" and a "frame" could find a place in either weaving or ritual. In 3cd the imagery is all from the sacrifice. In 3c the poet mentions the Praügaśastra, which is the second recitation of the Morning Pressing in the classical Agniṣṭoma. The recitation comprises I.2–3, which names the deities who receive soma in the three pressings in an Agniṣṭoma, and may have been singled out because of that. The last line could also be translated "when all the gods sacrificed to the god," but we have understood it as an echo of 6d and X.90.16a (=I.164.50a) *yajñéna yajñám ayajanta devā́ḥ* "with the sacrifice the gods offered the sacrifice."

The ritual frame described in verses 1–3 is then filled with gods in verses 4–5, verses that link the various meters of Vedic poetry with the major gods of the sacrificial day. There are various associations between a particular meter and a particular god: The sacrificial fire, Agni, begins the sacrificial day, and the gāyatrī meter is associated with the morning soma-pressing. The name of the br̥hatī-meter is similar to the name of Br̥haspati, and Indra hymns are characteristically composed in the triṣṭubh meter. And, balancing Agni and the gāyatrī, the All Gods and the jagatī meter are associated with the evening soma-pressing.

The last two verses recall the ancient sages who ordered the sacrifice and affirm that the priests today follow the path that has been set for them. As Geldner notes, the "courses (of the ritual)" refer to the actions of the ritual to which the recitations are attached.

1. The sacrifice, which is extended in every direction by its warp threads and stretched out by a hundred and one acts of the gods—
   these fathers who have traveled here weave that. They sit at the warp, saying, "Weave forth, weave back."
2. A man extends it [=the warp] and pulls it up (with the heddles); a man has extended it out upon the vault of heaven here.
   Here are their pegs; they [=the gods?] sat down upon their seat and made the sāman-chants the shuttles for weaving.
3. What was its model, its image? What its connection? What was its melted butter? What was its frame?
   What was the meter? What was the Praüga-recitation, what the hymn?— when all the gods offered the god [=the Sacrifice].
4. The gāyatrī meter became the yokemate of Agni. Savitar has united with the uṣṇihā meter
   and Soma with the anuṣṭubh meter, gaining greatness through the hymns. The br̥hatī meter helped the speech of Br̥haspati.
5. The virāj meter is the full glory of Mitra and Varuṇa, and the triṣṭubh meter is here Indra's portion of the (sacrificial) day.
   The jagatī meter entered the All Gods. According to this did the seers, the sons of Manu, arrange (the ritual).

6. The seers, the sons of Manu, our fathers, arranged (the ritual) according to this, when the sacrifice was born in ancient times.
   Seeing with my mind as my eye, I think of the ancient ones who offered this sacrifice.
7. The courses (of the ritual were) joined with the praise songs, joined with the meters. The heavenly Seven Seers were joined with the model (of the rite).
   Looking along the path of the ancients, the insightful ones [=the present priests] have taken hold of the reins (of the sacrifice) like charioteers.

X.131 (957) Indra (1–3, 6–7), Aśvins (4–5)

Sukīrti Kākṣīvata
7 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 4

The Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to a descendant of Kakṣīvant, the clever wordsmith of I.116–26, and, although the poem is framed by conventional prayers for help to Indra (vss. 1, 6–7), there is more than a flash of Kakṣīvant's brilliance in the intermediate verses, especially 2–3. Moreover, almost half of Kakṣīvant's output consists of Aśvin hymns (I.116–120), indeed, more than half by verse count, and verses 4–5 of our hymn allude to a myth not otherwise found in the Ṛgveda but prevalent in later Vedic, in which the Aśvins figure prominently.

Verses 2 and 3 have a slightly folksy air, using homely images to provide a model for Indra's behavior toward us. In verse 2 the model is the harvesting and threshing of grain; if our interpretation is correct, the poet compares the threshing of the grain, which gets rid of the chaff and keeps only the wholesome grain, to decisions Indra should make about how to distribute goods he has acquired. The goods should come only to us [=the good grain], not to those [=the chaff] who neglect their sacrificial tasks. This image has the type of twist that Kakṣīvant enjoys: the audience thinks at first that the grain is being compared to the "goodies" to be distributed, and when that interpretation doesn't work, they must dig deeper to redistribute the metaphorical roles.

Verse 3 is not as conceptually complex, but it displays a virtuosic density. The first pāda contains the entire metaphorical model: a one-horse vehicle won't succeed, or in an expanded and more literal paraphrase, "there is nothing that, when drawn by a single animal, has traveled in the right way." The implications are then worked out: pāda b suggests that relying on oneself alone will not bring fame; the last half of the verse provides the solution: seek Indra as helper and yokemate.

This message, that everyone needs a helper, is then projected onto the mythological plane, indeed onto the greatest hero—often presented as acting triumphantly alone—Indra. The little snatch of the Aśvin story found in verses 4–5 emphasizes how they and Sarasvatī "helped" Indra in his need. This myth has been much

discussed in the literature (see especially Bloomfield [1893] and Oldenberg [1893], as well as Jamison [1991: 98–103]), especially in its relationship to the later Sautrāmaṇī ritual, which in fact utilizes some of the verses in this hymn and which owes its name to the epithet of Indra found in verses 6–7, *sutrā́man* "of good protection." We will not pursue the issue in detail here. In brief summary, Indra became sick after drinking an excess of soma, and in order to heal him the Aśvins and Sarasvatī had him drink the usually forbidden alcohol surā, which they obtained in one way or another (the methods are different at different periods in Vedic) from the asuric Namuci. The surā was not pure but mixed, and both the Aśvins and Indra are here depicted as performing the singular feat of separating the two mixed liquids in the course of drinking them.

If even Indra occasionally needs helpers, we need feel no shame in seeking one ourselves, and in the last two verses (6–7) we express the hope that Indra will fill this role for us.

1. O overpowering Indra, thrust away all the eastern foes, away the western ones,
   away the northern ones, o champion, and away the southern ones, so that we might rejoice in your broad shelter.
2. Surely it is like barley-growers and their barley—how they cut it, threshing it according to the old ways—
   (so), here, just here (with us [=grain]) put the goodies of those [=chaff] who have not come for the reverent twisting of the sacred grass.
3. Because a "one-horse" carriage doesn't drive well, so fame has never been acquired (thus) at the encounters.
   Inspired ones, seeking cows, seeking horses, seeking prizes, (seek) the bull Indra for partnership.
4. O Aśvins, having separated the surā-soma by drinking it in company with the asuric Namuci,
   you helped Indra in his deeds, o lords of beauty.
5. Like parents their son, both the Aśvins helped (you), Indra, through their wondrous skills and sage words.
   When with your powers you separated the surā-soma by drinking it, Sarasvatī healed you, bounteous one.
6. Let Indra be of good protection, of good help with his help, very gracious, affording all possessions.
   Let him thrust away hatred; let him create fearlessness. Might we be lords of good heroes in abundance.
7. May we be in the favor of him who deserves the sacrifice, in his propitious benevolence.
   Let Indra of good protection, of good help to us keep hatred away even from a distance.

X.132 (958) Mitra and Varuṇa

Śākapūta Nārmedha
7 verses: nyaṅkusāriṇī 1, prastārapaṅkti 2, 6, virāḍrūpā 3–5, mahāsatobr̥hatī 7

This metrically messy hymn is, one must say, a mess in every other way as well. Given the serious disturbances in the meter, it is quite possible that many of the problems in the hymn result from faulty transmission, but we must translate what we have, not what we wish we had. At this point it is impossible to produce a satisfying account of the purport of the whole hymn and of its many puzzles of detail, but it is also not possible to supply even a tentative translation without having a prior hypothesis about the underlying aim of the composition. Geldner suggests that a specific political story lies behind it, full of sin, murder, and regal intrigue, but his sketch of this scenario is not convincing.

Our own hypothesis is less dramatic, though perhaps equally unconvincing. We believe that it reflects the ritual innovation happening during this late R̥gvedic period that split the earlier role(s) of sacrificing priest-poet into what in classical śrauta ritual are the "Sacrificer" (Yajamāna, lit. "the one sacrificing for himself"), who actually has little active participation in the sacrifice but provides the material support for it, and the working priests who are the actual physical and verbal performers of sacrifice. The new "Sacrificer" in part takes over the old role of "patron" (*sūrí)*, but maintains a more organic connection to the sacrifice. In this hymn this new type of Sacrificer is celebrated, as is his largesse to us, the working priests. Divine models for this split role with complementary duties are provided in the hymn—primarily by Mitra and Varuṇa, the ostensible dedicands, but also by Heaven and Earth (vss. 1 and 6, with Heaven also paired with Varuṇa in vs. 4) and the Aśvins (vs. 1).

Perhaps the best support for our views is the first verse, which contains three fronted repetitions of the perfect middle participle *ījāná* "having performed sacrifice for himself," the perfect-stem equivalent of the present middle participle *yájamāna* "sacrificing for himself" that is substantivized to become the title Sacrificer. This figure is the object of the ministrations of both Heaven and Earth (ab) and the Aśvins (cd). The first half of verse 2 contrastively introduces "us," the priests who are sacrificing (in the active voice, *yajāmasi*) at the prompting, presumably, of the Sacrificer, who appears in the second half of the verse, in the guise of another middle participle, *krāṇá* "performing (ritual) for himself." Mitra and Varuṇa bestow their favors on both parties and assure their joint victory over demonic forces.

Verse 3 is particularly challenging and has received numerous clashing interpretations, but we believe that it continues the theme of complementary roles and in fact introduces the motif of the Sacrificer's gifts to the priests. In our view "we," in our priestly role, are seeking to attract Mitra and Varuṇa to the sacrifice (pāda a), while the Sacrificer is represented as the giver in pāda c, with pāda d expressing the hope or expectation that no one can disrupt his gifts to us. Complicating

the interpretation is the rare and rather charged word *réknas* "legacy." However, *réknas* is several times used of what we gain from the gods at the sacrifice (e.g., I.31.5, 121.5, VI.20.7); in keeping with its etymology (from the root *ric* "leave"), it can be viewed as what was "left behind" by the gods at the sacrifice, and both the priests and the Sacrificer should receive it, as they both seem to in pādas b and c respectively.

Serious impediments to our (or anyone else's) interpretation arise in the following verses, especially the second half of verse 4 through the first half of verse 5. The first half of verse 5, in a twist on the classic "the one... the other" (*anyá... anyá*) construction typically used to depict the complementary functions of two individuals, posits the shared or successive kingship of Heaven and Varuṇa. In pāda 4c Varuṇa, addressed in the 2nd person, or Varuṇa or someone else, presented in the 3rd person (the verb is ambiguous), "takes pleasure in the chariot." The chariot could be the chariot of the sacrifice, found also in verse 7b, or the war chariot. The latter seems more likely in the context of the next pāda and the first hemistich of verse 5 and gains resonance from other features of the god Varuṇa. Pāda 5d states that "It is not by such a transgression that (a man) is (called) 'oath-breaker'" (following the reading *āntakadhrúk* of Eichner-Kühn [1982], who connected it to the seṭ root *am* "pledge, swear," rather than the previously standard interpretation *antaka*). What transgression? If it is what is found in the previous pāda, taking pleasure in the chariot, it might be a very oblique reference to Varuṇa's standard functions. It is well known that Varuṇa and Indra often share kingship (see the famous dialogue hymn IV.42), with Indra functioning as king in times of war, Varuṇa in times of peace. If Varuṇa is taking pleasure in the war chariot, his behavior is uncharacteristic and could indeed be considered transgressive, but, the poet tells us, it would not be sufficiently serious to constitute a breach of his normal duties, would not be an oath-breaking infraction. His unaccustomed behavior points to the theme of the hymn, by implication: each member of a pair has his own sphere and venturing out of that sphere may invite suspicion or even blame. (Alternatively, if the subject of pāda c is an unidentified third person, the pleasure that person/god takes in the war-chariot would not brand him as one who has violated his oath to Varuṇa.)

What *would* be a sufficient transgression is laid out in 5ab and attributed to an individual derogatorily named "Shit-purified" (*Śakapūta*)—namely, treacherously continuing to attack fallen warriors after a peace-treaty has been concluded. Even if our speculations about the meaning of 4cd–5ab are correct (and there are alternative interpretations; for example that 4ab refers to the passing of power from Father Sky [Dyaus Pitar] to gods such as Varuṇa and Indra possibly depicted in X.124), it is difficult to understand why this bitter little anecdote was inserted into the hymn at this point and just as quickly dropped. Note, by the way, that the Anukramaṇī attributes this hymn to Śakapūta, but it is almost certainly the case that this name was simply plucked from the hymn itself. The Anukramaṇī's patronymic Nārmedha has a better chance of conforming to fact, as the name Nṛmedha is found in the

final verse, where poets typically name themselves, and a Nr̥medha Āngirasa is the supposed poet of several other hymns (VIII.89–90, 98–99; IX.27, 29; VIII.90 shows some parallels to our hymn).

The rest of verse 5 and all of verse 6 appear to concern the present sacrifice, where the pair Mitra and Varuṇa are to be found, as well as Heaven and Earth (in a simile)—in addition to Agni and Aditi, for good measure. Again, there are a number of difficulties in the details. The first half of the final verse (7) also takes place at the sacrifice, and it seems to reaffirm the split roles of Sacrificer and priest that we claim provide the subject for the hymn. The "two ruling over property" in pāda a are, of course, Mitra and Varuṇa, but they also represent the Sacrificer-patron figure, while the unnamed subject of pāda b is the actual priestly officiant who will direct the chariot of the sacrifice.

We would be perfectly happy if the hymn had ended with 7b, for the last hemistich presents yet another unsolvable challenge. As noted above, the poet (if that's who it is) Nr̥medha names himself in this half-verse, also under the punning designation Sumedha. But the nature of the exploit he boasts of—the rescue of a certain set of females (or feminine-gender items)—must remain opaque, because the word characterizing the rescued is an impossible hapax, a plural present participle to an apparent denominative verb meaning "seek/behave as/perform *kaṇūka*," a word with no etymology or apparent relatives. Following Sāyaṇa, most modern translators render it as "lamenting," but this was clearly a desperate, though contextually plausible, guess on the part of Sāyaṇa, and it seems better to leave the poet's punning wordplay or contemporary reference untranslated.

1. The man who has sacrificed for himself—Heaven with its welcomed goods (is occupied in tending) just to him; Earth is (occupied in) tending to him who has sacrificed for himself.
   The two gods, the Aśvins, with their favors have strengthened him who has sacrificed for himself.
2. By reason of the (ritual) prompt we sacrifice to you two, o Mitra and Varuṇa, who uphold the communities and offer good favors.
   By your comradeship for the man who performs (ritual) for himself might we prevail over demons.
3. And even now, when we seek to establish you two here, while coming into possession of our own dear legacy,
   or when the giver prospers with regard to his legacy, no one shall bring his bounties (for us) into collision [=destroy them].
4. The one, yonder Heaven, was consecrated (as king), but (the other, namely) you, lord Varuṇa, are (now) king of all.
   As head (of all), you take pleasure in the chariot [=war chariot? chariot of the sacrifice?]. It is not by such a transgression that (a man) is (called) "oath-breaker,"

5. But on this (man), on "shit-purified" Śakapūta, is this transgression: even though a (peace) alliance was concluded, he keeps smiting the heroes who have gone down.
   When the charger [=Agni?] has placed the help of *you two in his own dear bodies worthy of the sacrifice—
6. Because, o discerning ones, Aditi, the mother of you two is, like Heaven and Earth, (occupied) in purifying with her milk—
   (all of you,) allot things dear (to us); wash (us) with the rays of the sun.
7. Because you two who rule over property have taken your seats, he [=the priest?] has mounted, like a chariot, the one [=sacrificial fire] sitting at the chariot-pole (of the sacrifice), sitting on the wood.
   Those females of ours, seeking [/behaving like] *kaṇūka* [?], has Nṛmedha rescued from narrow straits, has "very wise" Sumedha rescued from narrow straits.

X.133 (959) Indra

Sudās Paijavana
7 verses: śakvarī 1–3, mahāpaṅkti 4–6, triṣṭubh 7

The most salient feature of this hymn is the refrain of the first six verses, "let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows," an elaboration on the Nābhāka Kāṇva refrain of VIII.39–42 "let all the other squirts burst," though there is no apparent connection between the two poets. Our hymn is attributed to Sudās Paijavana; Sudās is the name of the leading king in the Battle of the Ten Kings, on whose side Indra fought, and it is perhaps not an accident that the first three verses in this hymn are in a form of śakvarī meter (here seven pādas of eight syllables). In VII.33.4 "a lofty cry in śakvarī" is what attracted Indra to fight on the side of Sudās in this battle. It is meter that also provides the possible connection with the Nābhāka Kāṇva hymns just mentioned: the rare śakvarī meter is also found in VIII.40.2, and the likewise rather rare mahāpaṅkti meter (six pādas of eight syllables) of the second three verses of our hymn (4–6) is also the meter of the Nābhāka hymns VIII.39, VIII.40 (save for vss. 2 and 12), and VIII.41.

The hymn celebrates the martial deeds and powers of Indra and urges the god to use his powers against our enemies, both within and without.

1. Chant forth to him a leading chariot (of a hymn), a fortifying (hymn) to Indra.
   As a maker of wide space even in close quarters, a Vṛtra-smiter in combat and conflicts, become our inciter.
   – Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
2. You sent the rivers surging downward; you smashed the serpent.

You were born without a rival, Indra; you foster everything of value. We embrace you.
– Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.

3. All the hostilities of the stranger will disappear, while our poetic insights will reach beyond (those) of the stranger.
You are wont to shoot the murderous weapon at the rival who wishes to smite us, Indra. Your generosity—(that is just) giving goods.
– Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
4. Indra, the folk all about who, acting the wolf, will set their sights on us,
set them beneath our feet. You are an overpowering oppressor.
– Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
5. Indra, whoever of the same lineage assails us and whoever outside the pale—
bring his power low. (You are) like great Heaven in your own person.
– Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
6. We, seeking you, seize hold of your companionship, Indra.
Lead us along the path of truth, across all difficult passages.
– Let the little bowstrings of the other squirts burst on their bows.
7. O Indra, for us exert your power over her who will milk out a choice thing for the singer—
so that the great cow with unsplit udder will swell with milk for us, in a thousand streams.

X.134 (960) Indra

Māndhātar Yauvanāśva (1–6a), Godhā (6b–7)
7 verses: mahāpaṅkti, except paṅkti 7

Although the Anukramaṇī assigns X.133 and X.134 to different poets, they seem to be companion pieces. The latter hymn shares its meter, mahāpaṅkti, with the second triplet (vss. 4–6) of X.133; both hymns are dedicated to Indra and share phraseology (e.g., 133.4bc and 134.2cd); and 134 also has a refrain in its first six verses, though one without the slangy sassiness of 133.1–6.

Like the last hymn, this one asks Indra for help against our enemies and also for bounties. These are of course standard requests, but the imagery toward the end of the hymn (vss. 5–6) is both precise and quirky, particularly the picture of Indra using his ability like a long crook to pull down a high branch and shake down its fruit, an image in turn compared to a goat doing the same with his forefoot. (Anyone familiar with goat behavior will recognize this picture instantly.)

1. When, Indra, you filled the two world-halves, as Dawn does,
as the great sovereign king of the great domains
did the goddess Begetter beget you, did the auspicious Begetter beget you.

2. Make slack the taut (bow) of the evilly angry mortal.
   Set him beneath our feet—whoever will set his sights on us.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
3. Shake down these lofty all-glittering refreshments, you foe-smiter,
   through your abilities, able Indra, along with all your forms of help.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
4. Since you shake down all these, o Indra of a hundred resolves,
   like wealth for the presser, together with thousandfold forms of help,
   the goddess Begetter begot (you), the auspicious Begetter begot (you).
5. Like beads of sweat let the missiles fly down, scattered all around
   like blades of dūrvā grass. Let malevolence go away from us.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
6. Because you carry your ability like a long crook, you rich in counsel,
   you will hold (it) as a goat (does) a branch with its forefoot,
   bounteous one.
   – The goddess Begetter begat (you), the auspicious Begetter begat (you).
7. O gods, never do we confound, never do we efface (them):
   we practice obedience to your solemn utterances.
   We grab onto (you) here by the sides, by the shoulders.

X.135 (961) Yama

Kumāra Yāmāyana
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

Both baffling and deeply engrossing, this hymn has given rise to a multitude of interpretations, none of which produces a completely satisfactory reading. Without discussing previous interpretations in detail, we will add our own, with no expectation that it will meet with any more acceptance than those that preceded it.

It is generally (but not universally) agreed that it concerns a death, either that of a boy or that of his father, and the journey to (or from) the realm of Yama, the ruler of the dead (see, e.g., X.14). Both a boy (*kumārá*, vss. 3–5) and a father (vs. 1) are explicitly mentioned in the hymn, and we follow those who consider the dead man to be the father. The pleasant place over which Yama has domain is described in the first and last (7) verses; in the first verse the dead person is traveling there, while in the last he seems to have reached it successfully.

The first two verses appear to be spoken by the boy whose father has just died. He imagines his father's journey to Yama (vs. 1), and in verse 2 he displays a psychologically plausible ambivalence: he longs to see his father again, but recoils from even the thought of following him on his road to the realm of the dead. The solution to his psychological dilemma seems to be given in verses 3–4: the boy creates

a mental chariot without wheels that he mounts without seeing it, and presumably this vehicle carries him to his father without the rigors of the journey. To us this mental conveyance suggests a dream, and many of us have experienced such reunions with the beloved dead in dreams. But the chariot can also be (and in vs. 4 more likely is) the ritual, quite possibly the correctly performed funeral service for his father.

The real problems in this hymn are found in verses 5–6 and in particular the word *anudéyī*, found in both verses (5d, 6a) in identical phrases. Although the word is a transparent gerundive, in the feminine, formed to the lexeme *ánu-√dā* "hand over, concede" and should therefore mean "to be handed over, conceded," its exact usage is completely unclear. Its only other occurrence is in the wedding hymn (X.85.6), where it appears to refer to a bridesmaid or female servant of the bride, who is to accompany her to her new home. Interpretations of the word in this hymn vary wildly, an indication of the problems it poses: Grassmann "Braut" (bride); Geldner "Amme" (nurse); Renou "viatique" (provisions for a journey; *EVP*), but "chargement" (cargo; *Hymnes spéculatives* [1956]); Oldenberg (following Caland) "Anustaraṇīkuh" (cow to be killed at the funeral rite); Griffith "funeral gift"; Macdonell "equipment"; Doniger O'Flaherty "gift for the journey." Our own interpretation is informed by the use of the lexeme *ánu-√dā* in an Atharvaveda passage (AVŚ VI.118.1–2), a passage found in various versions also in the Paippalāda recension of the Atharvaveda, in the Maitrāyaṇa Saṃhitā, and in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. In this passage the speaker asks for his offenses, his debts (*ṛṇá*), to be forgiven, using the verb *ánu-dā* (vs. 1: "let the two Apsarases forgive this *ṛṇá* of ours today"), and he seeks for this to happen before he enters "Yama's world." The part of the passage concerning Yama's world is read variously in the various texts and has clearly been subject to corruption, but in most readings the person in question fears entering Yama's world "with a rope on" (*ádhirajju*), a rope presumably imposed by his debts.

Reading our passage with these passages in mind, we may speculate that verses 5 and 6 find the father arriving at Yama's world with the same anxiety apparent in the passages just referred to: that he will be called to account for the debts he owes and must prove that they have been repaid or forgiven (*ánu-√dā*) before he enters that realm. The Taittirīya Saṃhitā (VI.3.10.5) already knows the three debts (also *ṛṇá*) with which a brahmin is born: studentship to the ṛṣis, sacrifice to the gods, and sons for his ancestors. Although we see no trace of studentship in this hymn, the two questions in the first half of verse 5 provide implicit answers about the other two debts: the dead man begat a son, and he (and/or the son) also sent forth the chariot of sacrifice. Satisfactory answers about these debts clear the way for the father to enter Yama's realm in verse 6, and it may in fact be Yama who is asking the questions.

Several questions remain, however. Since *ṛṇá* "debt" is a neuter noun, why is *ánudeyī* feminine in gender? There are no obvious feminine referents in this hymn that could underlie this adjective. For this problem the Atharvaveda passage

provides a clue. As was noted above, the protagonist in that passage fears entering Yama's world "with a rope on," with the rope representing his unpaid debts. The word *rájju* "rope" is feminine, and we suggest that this symbolic representation is the referent of *ánudeyī*. A more literal rendering than that given in the translation below would be "(the rope/fetter of debt) to be forgiven."

Even in this interpretation verse 6 remains somewhat puzzling, though the overall impression made by the last three pādas is that of the enlargement of space. Here the clue is found in the final pāda, in the word *nirāyaṇam* "coming forth." The lexeme *nír-*√*i* (and closely related *nír-ā́-*√*i*) is almost entirely confined in the R̥gveda to birth contexts, to "coming forth" from the womb or a womblike container. In X.60.7 it is used not of an original birth, but of a symbolic rebirth, recalling a sick man to life. We suggest that here, too, a rebirth is at issue, but this time it is the rebirth into a happy life in Yama's world, where the dead man will be reunited with his body and partake of the pleasures hinted at in verses 1 and 7, as well as in, for example, X.14 (esp. vss. 7–9). The reuniting with the body after death in a distant realm is treated at length in X.56, where it is also likened to birth (X.56.1). The rebirth in our verse is somewhat graphically depicted, with the top (the head of the infant) coming out first, then the rest of his body, until the coming forth is completed. (Or, alternatively, the *nirayaṇam* may actually refer to the afterbirth.)

The last verse announces the dead and now reborn man's arrival at Yama's delightful seat, with the emphatic annunciatory pronouns *idám* (7a), *iyám* (7c), *ayám* (7d), all meaning "here is, this one right here." The promise of verse 1 has finally been fulfilled.

For a detailed presentation of this interpretation of X.135, see Jamison (forthcoming d).

1. [Boy:] The leafy tree where Yama holds symposium with the gods,
   toward there the clanlord, our father, follows the track of the
   ancient ones.
2. [Boy:] Him following the track of the ancient ones, wandering along
   yonder evil way,
   did I keep looking for reluctantly, but I was longing for him again.
3. [Father?:] The new chariot without wheels that you made with your
   mind, lad,
   the one that has a single shaft but faces in all directions—without seeing
   it, you mount it.
4. [Father?:] The chariot which you, lad, sent rolling forth from the
   inspired poets,
   following it the sāman melody rolled forth from here, set onto a boat.
5. [Yama? Poet?:] Who begat the lad? Who sent the chariot rolling out?
   Who could tell us this today, how the (debt) came to be forgiven?
6. As (the debt) came to be forgiven, after that the top was born;
   the base was stretched out in front and the "coming forth" was made behind.

7. Here is the seat of Yama, which is called the palace of the gods.
   Here is his pipe blown; here is he adorned with hymns.

X.136 (962) Muni [the Keśins "Long-Haired Ones"]

Vātaraśana's seven sons, the munis Jūti 1, Vātajūti 2, Viprajūti 3, Vr̥ṣāṇaka 4, Karikrata 5, Etaśa 6, R̥śyaśr̥ṅga 7
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

This short hymn about the long-haired (*keśin*) ascetic (*muni*) has gained a certain measure of fame as an apparent precursor of later extreme ascetic practices and of the Rudra-Śiva cult (based especially on the mention of Rudra in the last verse, where the ascetic drinks an apparent cultic substance in company with Rudra). From the R̥gvedic point of view its closest analogue is the Labasūkta (X.119), describing the sensations of a soma-drinker, with its refrain "Have I drunk of the soma? Yes!" Both hymns depict the experience as flight, especially flight sped by the wind (here see vss. 2–6) and affording a bird's eye view of the earth and its inhabitants (here vs. 4–5), and also emphasize the subject's sense of power over cosmic entities (here esp. vss. 1, 5).

The difference seems to be the identity of the drink that produces these sensations: soma in I.119, "poison" (*viṣá*) in this hymn. The mention of the latter substance begins and ends this hymn (vss. 1a, 7c) in ring composition. It is unclear what the liquid in question is. However, it should be noted that the drinker himself/itself is provided with characteristic somian vocabulary ("sweet, most exhilarating") in the last pāda (6d) before the final verse depicting the preparation and drinking of the poison, and furthermore that the preparation of this poison by churning/stirring (√*manth*) and crushing (√*piṣ*) seems to mimic the preparation of soma: "crush" is semantically close to "press" (√*su*), and a certain type of soma, mixed with meal, is technically called *manthín*. The prominence of the wind-god Vāyu (vss. 5, 7) is also reminiscent of the soma sacrifice, for Vāyu, along with Indra, is the first recipient of the soma drink. Thus, the cultic practice here is either being presented as a mirror-image analogue of the orthodox soma sacrifice, or in fact *is* the soma sacrifice, but in esoteric guise.

1. The long-haired one bears fire, the long-haired one poison, the long-haired one the two world-halves.
   The long-haired one (bears) the sun for all to see. The long-haired one is called this light here.
2. The wind-girt ascetics wear tawny rags.
   They follow the swooping of the wind when the gods have entered (them).
3. "Roused up to ecstasy by our asceticism, we have mounted the winds.
   You mortals see only our bodies."

4. He flies through the midspace, gazing down on all forms.
   The ascetic has been established as the comrade of every god for good action.
5. The horse of the wind, the comrade of Vāyu—so sped by (that) god, the ascetic
   presides over both seas, the eastern and the western.
6. Ranging in the range of the Apsarases and the Gandharvas, of the wild birds,
   the long-haired one is their sweet, most exhilarating comrade, who knows their will.
7. Vāyu churned it for him; Kunannamā kept crushing it,
   when the long-haired one drank of the poison with his cup, together with Rudra.

X.137 (963) All Gods

Bharadvāja 1, Kaśyapa 2, Gotama 3, Atri 4, Viśvāmitra 5, Jamadagni 6, Vasiṣṭha 7
7 verses: anuṣṭubh

The Anukramaṇī attributes these seven verses to seven different authors, and it is a distinguished group of poets indeed: the same foundational ṛṣis in the same order as in IX.67, a hymn that seems intended to bring together the separate poetic lineages into a unified pan-Ārya assemblage for political purposes.

It is difficult to discern such a grand design in this hymn, which, moreover, shows no signs of composite nature. Six of the seven verses (all but vs. 6) are found together in single hymns in both the Śaunaka and the Paippalāda recensions of the Atharvaveda (IV.13 and V.18 respectively), and the contents form a unity. Not surprisingly, given its Atharvaveda parallels, it is a simple Atharvan healing spell, calling on the gods, the wind, and the waters to bring a remedy for the disease afflicting the object of the spell. The poet-officiant is the actual effector of the healing, however, and in the last verse of the hymn (7; see also vs. 4) he deploys both his hands and his voice to bring about the cure—the usual pairing of action and speech characteristic of Atharvan practice.

1. O gods, the one who has been put down, o gods, you lead him up again.
   and, o gods, the one who has committed an offense, o gods, you make him live again.
2. These two winds blow from the river to the far distance.
   Let the one blow skill here for you; let the other blow far away what is malady.
3. O Wind, blow healing here; o Wind, blow away what is malady,
   for you, possessing all healing, speed as the messenger of the gods.

4. I have come to you with beneficial things, and also with noninjurious things.
   I have brought auspicious skill for you; I drive your disease far away.
5. Let the gods bring rescue here; let the troop of Maruts bring rescue;
   let all beings bring rescue, so that this one here will be without malady.
6. These very waters are truly remedies; the waters banish affliction.
   The waters are remedies for everything. Let them create a remedy for you.
7. With two hands with their ten branches—my tongue is the lead-cow of speech —
   with the two that free you from affliction, with these two, we touch you.

X.138 (964) Indra

Aṅga Aurava
6 verses: jagatī

This short hymn celebrating a number of Indra's great deeds is surprisingly obscure. It begins without much difficulty, with two verses devoted to the opening of the Vala cave, though even here there are some puzzles. The second verse ends with the triumphant appearance of the sun after the cave is opened.

This appearance seems to set the theme for the remaining verses of the hymn: though these four verses treat several different deeds of Indra (the destruction of Pipru's fortresses in vss. 3–4, the Vr̥tra smashing in at least part of vs. 5), they share a preoccupation with what we might call the deregulation of cosmic time and Indra's participation in and repair of these problems. In 3a the Sun "unhitched his chariot in the middle of heaven," an image that seems to suggest that the normal daily progress of the sun through the sky stopped abruptly and time stood still. This may, or may not, be a version of Indra's stealing the wheel of the Sun (see, e.g., V.29, 31; IV.30.4–5). Two factors favor the identification of the two mythic allusions. On the one hand, Kutsa generally appears associated with Indra's theft of the Sun's wheel, and he appears in our verse 1. On the other, the final pāda of our hymn (6c) may refer, very indirectly, to the restoration of the Sun's wheel in heaven (see below).

Similar to the stopping of the Sun's chariot in 3a is the striking incident in 5cd, also referred to elsewhere (though rarely; see esp. II.15.6, IV.30.8–11), in which Indra smashes the cart of the goddess Dawn, and she runs away in fear. Again, this seems to involve a perturbation of the ordinary progress of time. In between, 4c presents the sun and the moon in some relationship, which is entirely unclear but which does not seem entirely positive.

The second half of the final verse (6) seems to show Indra remedying the situation, perhaps restoring both nightly and daily cosmic time. In 6c he places in heaven

"the apportioner of the months," presumably the moon, while in 6d "the father" (*pitā́*, the final word of the hymn), presumably Father Heaven, "bears the circlet split apart by you [=Indra]." If we are correct that the stopping of the Sun's chariot in 3a is a preliminary to the stealing of his chariot-wheel, then the "wheel-segment" borne by Heaven could be the disc of the Sun now restored to its proper place.

However, much remains unclear in this hymn, and the interpretations given here are quite tentative.

1. In partnership with you, Indra, these conveyors (of songs), conceiving the truth, thoroughly split apart the Vala cave,
   when, showing favor to the dawns, making the waters flow, you exerted your wondrous power (on them) and on the fertile cows, for the sake of Kutsa and at his thought.
2. You released the fecund females, and you made the mountains bend. You drove up the ruddy ones, and you drank the dear honey [=soma].
   By your wondrous power you made the wooden (cups) strong for it. The Sun blazed forth with the song born of truth.
3. The Sun unhitched his chariot in the middle of heaven. The Ārya found a match for the Dāsa.
   The firm fortifications of the crafty lord Pipru did Indra throw open, having acted together with R̥jiśvan.
4. Defiant, he threw open the undefiable (fortifications); the unbridled one pulverized the ungodly treasure-houses.
   Like the Sun with the Moon, he took for his own the goods found in the fortress. Being sung, he shattered his rivals with his flashing (weapon).
5. Possessing weapons that cannot be combatted, the far-ranging Vr̥tra-smasher, doing his pious work by means of his splitting (weapon), sharpens (the weapons) to be brandished.
   She feared to be battered by Indra's mace. The preening female ran away: Dawn left her cart behind.
6. These (deeds) worthy of fame are yours exclusively, in that you alone made him alone to be one lacking the sacrifice.
   You set the apportioner of the months [=moon] in heaven. The father [=Heaven] bears the segment of the wheel that was split off by you.

X.139 (965) Sūrya (1–3), Viśvāvasu (4–6)

Viśvāsu Devagandharva
6 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn is a companion piece to the previous one (X.138), though the Anukramaṇī ascribes them to different poets and assigns different deities to them. The evidence

for their connection includes shared vocabulary and close lexical variants—e.g., *mádhye… diváḥ* 138.3 and *divó mádhye* 139.2 "in the middle of heaven"; *pradhí* ("wheel segment") 138.6 and *paridhí* ("encirclement") 139.4; *ahī́* "fertile cow" 138.1, 139.6; *daṃsáya* / *dáṃsas* 138.1, 2 "wondrous skill" and *dákṣa* 139.6 "skill, capability"—as well as ring composition: 138 begins with two verses about the opening of the Vala cave and the release of the fertile cows, and the final verse of 139 (vs. 6) returns to exactly this theme.

More subtle is their shared thematic concern. As noted in the introduction to 138, that hymn seems to treat disturbances to the orderly progress of cosmic time and the heavenly bodies that measure it, the sun, the moon, and dawn. By contrast X.139 focuses on the sun, in part through its (partial) representations: Savitar (vss. 1, 3) and the heavenly Gandharva (see also I.123, the Vena hymn, where Vena and the Gandharva represent an amalgam of the sun and Soma). The hymn also depicts the sun as holding its proper place and performing its proper functions. Though in this hymn (vs. 2) as in the last one (vs. 3) the sun stands still in the middle of heaven, in 138 this stoppage seemed ominous, whereas in this hymn the sun's position seems designed to give him the best view of the whole phenomenal world. It is repeatedly emphasized (vss. 1d, 2a, c, 3b) that he (or his representatives) sees everything, and as heavenly Gandharva he measures the airy realm (5b), again displaying proper cosmic progress.

It must be admitted, however, that many things remain unclear in this hymn, particularly verse 4.

1. With the rays of the sun, with golden hair, Savitar has raised up the unaging light from the east.
   At his instigation Pūṣan travels—the knowing cowherd surveying all beings.
2. With his eye on men, he sits in the middle of heaven, having filled both world-halves and the space between.
   He watches over (his mares? the ladles?) facing toward ghee, facing in all directions, between the eastern and the western beacon.
3. The foundation of wealth, the assembler of goods, he watches over all forms with his powers.
   Like god Savitar's, his ordinances hold true; like Indra, he stands at the confluence of spoils.
4. O Soma, the waters, having seen Viśvāvasu the Gandharva, then went apart by their truth.
   Indra, hastening, went down following that (truth?) of theirs. He looked around the encirclements of the sun.
5. Let Viśvāvasu sing it [=truth] to us—the heavenly Gandharva, the measurer of the airy realm—
   whether we know it to hold true or not. Spurring on insights, he should help just our insights.

6. He found the winner in the current of the rivers. He opened the doors for those with a rock as their pen.
   The Gandharva proclaimed their immortal (names). Indra came to know all about the capability of the fertile cows.

X.140 (966) Agni

Agni Pāvaka
6 verses: viṣṭārapaṅkti 1, satobr̥hatī 2–4, upariṣṭājjyotis 5, triṣṭubh 6 [per the Anukramaṇī, but this doesn't accurately reflect the meter of 5 and 6. Former is rather satobr̥hatī, while latter is 12 12 12 8]

Metrically varied but unremarkable in contents, this hymn recycles and enchains its vocabulary and phraseology while staying close to its core message: the ritual fire is lovely and brilliant, and it brings—or should bring—precious prizes to the humans who tend it.

1. O Agni, yours are fame and vitality; your beams flash greatly, o you with radiant goods.
   You of lofty radiance, with your power you establish a praiseworthy prize for the pious, o sage poet.
2. Of pure luster, of gleaming luster, of unfailing luster, you rise up with your radiance.
   As a son wandering between your two mothers, you approach (them) helpfully. You fill both world-halves.
3. O Child of Nourishment, Jātavedas, delight yourself with good lauds, when you are roused by hymnic visions.
   In you have those of brilliant help assembled precious-born refreshments of manifold forms.
4. O Agni, exerting control, have yourself extended by the (human) kinsmen. In us (be) riches, o immortal one.
   You rule over a wonder lovely to see. You (ful)fill your resolve that brings gain.
5. (You,) the preparer of refreshment for the ceremony, forethoughtful, holding sway over great benefit, (have they set in front)—
   you establish the well-portioned gift of a precious thing: great refreshment and wealth that brings gain.
6. (You) the truthful one, the buffalo lovely for all to see: Agni have the peoples set in front for benevolence—
   you with listening ears, of greatest extent, the divine one have the human generations (set in front) with a hymn.

X.141 (967) All Gods

Agni Tāpasa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This simple hymn continues the message of the immediately preceding one, but with far less subtlety. The poet calls upon Agni (vss. 1, 3, 6, and implicitly 5) and an array of other gods, particularly Bṛhaspati (vss. 2–5), to ensure that he and his fellow officiants are well rewarded for their ritual service. The focus on Agni and Bṛhaspati clearly reflects the ritual orientation of the hymn, with Agni representing the physical activity of sacrifice and Bṛhaspati the verbal portion.

1. O Agni, address us here; facing us, become well-disposed to us.
   Provide for us, Lord of the Clan. You are a prize-giver to us.
2. Let Aryaman provide for us, let Bhaga, let Bṛhaspati,
   let the gods and let Liberality. Let the goddess give riches to us.
3. On King Soma for help, on Agni we call with hymns,
   on the Ādityas, on Viṣṇu, on Sūrya, and on Bṛhaspati the formulator.
4. On Indra and Vāyu, easy to call, on Bṛhaspati we call here,
   so that every person will be well-disposed to us on meeting.
5. Spur on Aryaman, Bṛhaspati, and Indra to give—
   Wind, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī, and Savitar the prizewinner.
6. You, Agni, with your fires, strengthen our sacred formulation and the sacrifice.
   You, spur on the divine assemblage to give wealth to us.

X.142 (968) Agni

The four Śārṅgas: Jaritar 1–2, Droṇa 3–4, Sārisṛkva 5–6, Stambamitra 7–8
8 verses: triṣṭubh, except jagatī 1–2, anuṣṭubh 7–8

Though short, this hymn displays both a well-articulated structure and intricate patterns of repetition and phonological echoes. The first six verses, in trimeter meter, have an outer ring (vss. 1, 6) and an inner, thematically contrasting core. Verse 1 praises the protective, ritual fire, and verse 6 returns to this prize-giving fire and the divine attendance upon it. In between, verses 2–5 describe fire as an ever-more-dangerous substance. Though in verse 2 the danger is confined and contrasted with the poets' successful productions, the following verses give free rein to the destructive power of wildfire with vivid descriptions of its progress through the land.

The final two verses, in a different meter, append a magical charm, to banish dangerous fire from the land and make that land the abode of water and plants.

The Anukramaṇī identifies "the four Śārṅgas" as the poets of the hymn. This is an allusion to an episode in the Mahābhārata (Śārṅgopākhyānam, MBh I.220–25),

in which four birds, sons of an ascetic, are spared by Agni during the otherwise complete burning of the Khāṇḍava Forest. This tale almost certainly postdates the composition of our hymn.

1. O Agni, this singer here has come to abide in you, for there exists no other friendship, o Son of Strength—
   for auspicious is your shelter, providing threefold defense. Put away in the distance the injurious missile.
2. Your birth, Agni, is a headlong plunge as you seek nourishment. You seem to bear down on all creatures at once.
   Our teams, our insightful thoughts shall gain the lead. They proceed in front like cowherds, by themselves.
3. And truly you bend around, snapping at the abundant brush, o Agni of independent power.
   And there come to be waste-places in the fields. Let us not antagonize your missile, your power.
4. When you travel to the heights and the depths, snapping, you go in all directions, like an army in greedy pursuit.
   When the wind fans your flame, like a barber a beard you shave the ground.
5. His ranks have appeared opposite—many chariots (along) a single downward course—
   when, o Agni, continually stroking your two arms, you go, bending downward, along the upstretching earth.
6. Let your blasts rear up, let your beam; let your prizes, Agni, for the one who labors for you.
   Arch up, bow down, as you grow. Let all the Vasus attend upon you today.
7. Here is the descending course of the waters, here the settling down of the sea.
   Make yourself another path from this one here. Proceed along it at will.
8. On your course hither and your course away let flowering dūrvā grass grow,
   and ponds and lotus blossoms. Here is the house of the sea.

X.143 (969) Aśvins

Atri Sāṃkhya
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is presumably one of the younger Atrids, not the Atri who is the eponymous poet of the Vth Maṇḍala, and the whole hymn is devoted to

requests for help from the Aśvins for him and his fellows. In the first two verses he asks that the Aśvins aid him as they did others in past times. The third verse offers recompense for their aid: if they help him to produce insightful poems, these poems will be for them alone. Verses 4 and 6 expand the targets of the aid from Atri alone to his ritual companions, while verse 5 offers the mythological example of Bhujyu, often mentioned elsewhere as a client whose life the Aśvins saved, as a model for what we ourselves hope for.

1. (Make) also this Atri, grown old in the truth, (new again), to drive like a horse to his goal,
 when you two make Kakṣīvant new again, like a chariot.
2. (Unloose) also this one, like a prizewinning horse, to which the dustless (paths) have stretched themselves;
 unloose the youngest Atri, like a tight knot, (to stretch) across the airy realm.
3. You two most wondrous, resplendent men, seek to win insights for Atri,
 for then, o men of heaven, your praise song will never again (need) to be carved up [=shared with other gods].
4. O very bountiful Aśvins, your generosity and benevolence are to be noted in this:
 that you will bring us safely across to the broad seat and the (festive) assembly (of the sacrifice), o men.
5. Bhujyu, pitched and tossed in the sea at the far end of the airy realm—
 you drove to him with your winged ones. O Nāsatyas, make (our insight?) to win.
6. O most munificent ones possessing all property, (attend upon us) with your favors, like (parents) wishing (our) welfare;
 attend to refreshments for us that swell like a spring, o men.

X.144 (970) Indra

Suparṇa Tārkṣyaputra or Ūrdhvakr̥śana Yāmāyana
6 verses: gāyatrī 1, 3–4, br̥hatī 2, satobr̥hatī 5, viṣṭārapaṅkti 6

Although the Anukramaṇī names Indra as the divinity of this hymn, it is dominated by Soma. Indra appears only in the first and last (6) verses as the recipient of the soma drink, represented ring-compositionally by the "drop" (*índu*) in both verses. His return to the hymn is anticipated by the minimal *te* "for you" in the penultimate verse 5. In between the poet first describes Soma's talents (vss. 1–2), and then narrates (or alludes to the narrative of) the famous theft of Soma by the falcon. This account is highly poeticized, with vocabulary deployed in obscure metaphors. In our view both 3a and 4c refer, in very different ways, to the fortresses in which Soma

was confined (see IV.27.1 and IV.26.3 for the hundred fortresses, also keeping in mind that "fortress" [*púr*] is grammatically feminine). Since Soma is being guarded in heaven, when he looks down (vs. 3c) in search of his falcon rescuer he sees clouds, again metaphorically represented.

The vivifying effects of Soma are treated in verses 5–6, as is his role in reinforcing the relationship (*bandhútā* "family tie," 5d) between gods and men, by means of the sacrificial offering. Verse 6b may contain the first occurrences of the later notion of sacrifice as "surrender" (*tyāgá*, found here in a different nominal derivative of the same root, *tyájas*). Indra takes the oblation surrendered by men and places it among the gods.

1. Because this deathless drop here, like a courser, displays his mastery
   as lifelong skill for you, the ritual adept,
2. He is a craftsman in poetic art among us and a mace for the one
      generous with gifts.
   Like a craftsman, he brings the exhilarating drink with pearls [=bubbles]
      on top—the exhilarating drink that gets results.
3. Eager for the energetic falcon, the bull among his own females
      [=fortresses?]
   looked down at those puffing up like snakes [/swelling like fertile cows]
      [=clouds?] —
4. He whom the fine-feathered (bird), the son of the falcon, brought
      here from afar— him who had a hundred wheels [=concentric
      fortresses?]—who is the track of the fertile cow—
5. Whom the falcon brought here for you with his foot, the cherished
      one who keeps the wolf away, who is the ruddy housing of
      the stalk—
   by him is vitality, is lifetime lengthened for living; through him does our
      family tie stay vigilant.
6. Thus, by the drop Indra will secure that great surrender (of the offering)
      also among the gods.
   By your will is vitality, is lifetime lengthened, o you of strong will; by
      your will has this soma here been pressed from us.

X.145 (971) Against Cowives

Indrāṇī
6 verses: anuṣṭubh, except paṅkti 6

Attributed to Indra's wife, Indrāṇī, this hymn is spoken in the 1st person by a woman conjuring against her cowife for the affections of their joint husband. In Atharvan style (and with an Atharvaveda correspondent, AVŚ III.18), it combines ritual/magic action with a verbal spell. The speaker digs the efficacious plant (vss.

1–2) and applies the plant to her husband (vs. 6), while confidently proclaiming her victory over her rival (esp. vss. 3–5). A similar hymn against cowives is found at X.159.

1. This plant do I dig, most powerful shoot,
   with which (a woman) repels her cowife, with which (she) acquires her own husband completely.
2. You with outstretched leaves, luck-bringing, god-sped, possessing victorious might—
   blow away my cowife, make my husband my own.
3. Higher am I, o higher one, higher even than the higher ones.
   But she who is my cowife, she is lower than the lower ones.
4. I do not take [=mention] her name, nor does she rest by this person [=husband].
   To the farthest farness we (all) make my cowife go.
5. I am gaining victory, and you [=plant] are victorious.
   Both having become victoriously mighty, we two shall be victorious over my cowife.
6. On you [=husband] have I laid the (plant) that wins victory; I have harnessed you with an even more victorious one.
   Let your mind run forth after me, like a cow after a calf, like water along its path.

X.146 (972) Lady of the Wilderness (Araṇyānī)

Devamuni Airammada
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This lovely and evocative hymn has been much translated. It is dedicated to the spirit of the *araṇya*, the wild place, and the contrast between the wild place and the settled one, an opposition that runs throughout Indian literature, dominates the hymn. Despite the ostensible dedication, the poet tries as much as possible to evade the wilderness and conjure up the safety of the village. From the start, in the first verse he expresses surprise that the Lady of the Wilderness herself doesn't inquire for a village or settlement (*grā́mam*); he is surprised that she is not afraid of her own domain. The strange sounds that accompany the Lady in her progress and the strange (and unidentified) animals that make those sounds in verse 2 clearly unsettle the poet, and in verses 3 and 4 the poet, seeming himself to be in the wilderness at nightfall, attempts to transform the threatening sights and sounds of the wild into reassuring domestic scenes—cows grazing and lowing, woodsmen, the creak of a cart—though this cheerful self-deception does not last. The poet abruptly breaks off the sequence with "(something) has shrieked!" The final two verses of this short hymn contain a formal praise of

Araṇyānī, but even this begins with the negative, and slightly nervous, reassurance that she doesn't kill unless she's attacked; the positive portions of the praise come second.

1. O Lady of the Wilderness, Lady of the Wilderness, you there, who seem to be lost just ahead.
   How is that you don't ask for the village? Does fear not find you at all?
2. When the *ciccika* (bird?/bug?) helps out the bull-roarer [=frog? bird?] as it speaks,
   the Lady of the Wilderness displays her greatness like (a king?) who hurtles along amid the clash of cymbals.
3. And it's as if cows are eating and as if a settlement is seen,
   and the Lady of the Wilderness at evening—it's as if there's a cart creaking.
4. Surely it's someone calling his cow; surely another has been splitting wood.
   But staying by the Lady of the Wilderness at evening, one imagines "(Something) has shrieked!"
5. In truth, the Lady of the Wilderness does no slaughter, if someone else does not attack.
   Having eaten sweet fruit, one settles down at pleasure.
6. Fragrant with ointments, sweet-smelling, providing much food though she does no plowing,
   the Mother of wild beasts, the Lady of the Wilderness have I proclaimed.

X.147 (973) Indra

Suvedas Śairīṣi
5 verses: jagatī, except triṣṭubh 5

The poet begins his hymn (vs. 1, 2ab) by proclaiming his trust in Indra's "battle fury" (*manyú*), on the basis of the god's deeds and his dominance over the cosmic spaces. It turns out that the poet has something more than simply praise on his mind. Indra and his battle fury are much in demand among men in search of victory and its spoils (vs. 2cd), and the poet recommends his patrons to Indra's attention and care (vs. 3). He realizes, however, that securing Indra's help requires proper ritual observance (vs. 4). The hymn ends (vs. 5) with explicit requests for Indra's aid and bounty, such desires having been only indirectly expressed earlier in the hymn.

1. I put my trust in your foremost battle-fury, in that you smashed Vr̥tra and labored at the manly work,
   in that both world-halves yield to you and even earth trembles from your tempest, o possessor of the stone.

2. You, faultless one, with your wiles shook wily Vr̥tra to pieces, with your fame-seeking mind.
   Just you do superior men choose in their quests for cattle, you when all sacrifices are to be offered.
3. Take pleasure in these patrons, o much-invoked one, the strengtheners who have attained to your bounty, bounteous one.
   They chant to (you) the prizewinner when kith and kin (are at issue), in (hostile) encirclements, at the winning of wisdom, when immoderate stakes (are set).
4. Just that man will find pleasure in wealth that is easy to bear away who will realize that the exhilaration of this one [=Indra] is to be hastened.
   With you as his strengthener, bounteous one, one who performs pious ceremonies quickly bears away the prize, the stakes, along with his men.
5. You—being sung, make wide (space) for the troop with your greatness, bounteous one; show mastery over wealth.
   You are an ally [/Mitra] to us, wily like Varuṇa. You distribute (wealth) like an apportioner of food, wondrous one.

X.148 (974) Indra

Pr̥thu Vainya
5 verses: triṣṭubh

This hymn offers some tricky bits of syntax and phraseology in what is otherwise a standard praise of Indra and request for his aid. The poet seems especially aware that Indra bestows his aid on those whom he likes (see esp. vss. 1c, 3b, 4c) and so emphasizes men's need to offer abundant praise and oblations with a cheerful spirit.

1. After having pressed soma we praise you, Indra, and also after having won the prize, you powerfully manly one.
   Bring us well-being (for him) in whom you take pleasure. Through ourselves and our lineage may we win, aided by you.
2. Lofty were you when you were just born, o champion Indra. Along with the sun, you should overcome the Dāsa clans,
   (as you did) the one placed in hiding, fit to be hidden, hidden in the waters [=Vr̥tra]. We offer soma as if in a gushing (stream).
3. Or, (Indra,) chant in response to the hymns of the stranger—as the wise one, inspired poet among the seers, taking pleasure in good thinking.
   May we be the ones who find enjoyment by means of the soma drinks—through this and through the portions for you, who are conveyed on a chariot.

4. These sacred formulations here have been recited to you, Indra. Give the might of men to men, o champion.
   Be of the same resolve with those in whom you take pleasure. And protect the singers and their people.
5. Hear the call from Pr̥thī, o champion Indra, and you will be praised by the chants of Venya,
   who has roared toward your ghee-filled womb. Like a wave along the depths, (his chants) run (there) billowing.

X.149 (975) Savitar

Arcat Hairaṇyastūpa
5 verses: triṣṭubh

The poet of this hymn is identified by the Anukramaṇī as a descendant of Hiraṇyastūpa, and in the last verse (6) the poet compares his own invocation of Savitar with that of Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa, who, in fact, appears in the Anukramaṇī as the author of I.31–35 and IX.4 and 6—with I.35 also a hymn to Savitar. Thus this hymn may be making a cross reference to another hymn in the saṃhitā. Although there are no blatant links between the two hymns, both are concerned with the divisions of the cosmos and Savitar's relationship to them. In this hymn especially Savitar's cosmogonic role is highlighted.

1. Savitar brought the earth to rest with his fastening straps; in the place with no prop Savitar made heaven fast.
   Savitar has milked the boisterous midspace like a stallion, (has milked out) the sea bound within the unfathomable (realm).
2. Where the propped-up sea flooded forth—Savitar knows that, o Child of the Waters—
   from there was the world, from there was the airy realm arisen; from there heaven and earth spread out.
3. After this (world) here there came into being the other one [=heaven], deserving the sacrifice, with its fill of immortal creation.
   Certainly the fine-feathered Garutmant(-bird) of Savitar [=sun] was born earlier, and it (was born) in accordance with his support.
4. Like cows to the village, like a warrior to his horses, like a bellowing, benevolent milker to her calf,
   like a husband to his wife—let him come down to us, the supporter of heaven, Savitar bringing all desirable things.
5. Just as Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa called on you, Savitar, when this prize (was in question),
   even so, chanting to you for help, extolling you, I stay wakeful facing toward you, as if toward the plant of soma.

X.150 (976) Agni

Mr̥ḍīka Vāsiṣṭha
5 verses: br̥hatī 1–3, upariṣṭājjyotis or jagatī 4, upariṣṭājjyotis 5

A simple hymn with a rigid skeletal structure, despite the variety of meters. The last pāda of every verse begins with a form of *mr̥ḍīká* "grace, mercy," in all but verse 4 the dative *mr̥ḍīkā́ya*. (This repetition is clearly responsible for the Anukramaṇī's ascription to a poet with the given name Mr̥ḍīka.) The object of the poet's address throughout is the god Agni; for the first half of the hymn (through vs. 3ab) he is unnamed though easily identifiable from his attributes; from then on a form of his name opens every hemistich. The contents of the hymn are quite straightforward: Agni is urged to come to our sacrifice, bringing the gods along. In the final verse (5) his aid to various legendary humans is recalled, and the poet names himself as Vasiṣṭha (or "best one")—again, no doubt responsible for the Anukramaṇī's patronymic Vāsiṣṭha, although the distinctive clan refrain of the Vasiṣṭhas is not present.

The final two verses also contain the epithet *puróhita*, literally "set in front," applied first to Agni (4a) and then to the poet Vasiṣṭha (5cd). Ritually speaking the sacrificial fire is indeed "set in front": the offering fire is established on the eastern edge of the ritual ground. However, there is no clear ritual reason to refer to the poet as "set in front," and it seems likely that in this late hymn the term has already become the designation of a particular type of priest, in later times the king's "house-priest."

1. Even when you have been kindled, you are kindled (again), o oblation-bearer for the gods.
   With the Ādityas, the Rudras, the Vasus, come to us here. For grace come to us here.
2. This sacrifice here—having delighted in this speech, come near to it.
   We mortals call you, kindled one; for grace we call.
3. You, Jātavedas, granting all wishes, do I hymn with my insightful thought.
   O Agni, bring here to us the gods whose commandments are dear, for grace (bring) those whose commandments are dear.
4. Agni, the god, became the one set in front [/Purohita] of the gods; Agni have the human seers kindled.
   Agni do I invoke greatly at the winning of the stakes; (I invoke) his grace for the winning of the stakes.
5. Agni helped Atri, Bharadvāja, Gaviṣṭhira, helped Kaṇva and Trasadasyu for us at the challenge.
   Agni does Vasiṣṭha, set in front [/Purohita], call; for grace does the one set in front [/Purohita] (call).

X.151 (977) Śraddhā

Śraddhā Kāmāyanī
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

The word *śraddhā́*, often translated "faith," has a long and culturally freighted history in Indic religion. In its Vedic origins it refers not to "faith," at least in the Western, Christian sense (cf. its Latin cognate *credō*), but rather to "trust"—especially in the efficacy of cultural institutions, and there especially in hospitality and the sacrifice, itself a specialized type of hospitality. (For further discussion see Jamison [1996a: 176–84].)

In this hymn its close ties to the sacrifice are quite clear. Note especially the last verse (5), which makes not-so-veiled reference to the three soma-pressings; the appearance of Vāyu in the previous verse probably refers to the fact that he receives the first soma offering at the Morning Pressing. One of the important facets of trust in the sacrifice is the certainty that a properly performed sacrifice will produce material rewards for the performer, and this belief is reflected throughout the hymn; see especially verses 2–4.

1. With trust is the fire kindled; with trust is the oblation poured.
   We at the head of good fortune make known our trust with speech.
2. O Trust, this (speech) spoken by me: make it dear to him who gives, dear to him who intends to give,
   and dear among the benefactors who offer sacrifice, o Trust.
3. Just the gods created trust in themselves among the powerful lords,
   so among the benefactors who offer sacrifice make what has been spoken by us trust(ed).
4. Trust do the gods revere, sacrificing for themselves with Vāyu as their herdsman—
   trust, with a purpose that comes from their heart. By trust one gains possession of goods.
5. Trust do we call early in the morning, trust at midday,
   trust at the setting of the sun. O Trust, place a trusting heart here in us.

X.152 (978) Indra

Śāsa Bhāradvāja
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

The martial Indra, the "commander," is called upon here to destroy our various enemies. A surprising amount of attention is given to "the scornful" (vss. 2–4). Although verbal abuse may not seem to modern mentalities to pose the same sort

of threat as more physical assaults, the ancient Indian belief in the power of speech to inflict real harm is on view here. At issue may also be ritualized exchanges of insults before battle.

1. As commander, you are great in just this way: as the infallible devourer of foes,
   whose comrade is not slain nor is he ever conquered.
2. As the lord of the clan who gives well-being, the Vr̥tra-smasher, (smasher) of the scornful, exerting his will—
   let the bull Indra go before us, the soma-drinker, the creator of fearlessness.
3. Smash away the demon, away the scornful; break apart the jaws of Vr̥tra.
   O Indra, Vr̥tra-smasher, (smash) away the battle fury of the foe who assails us.
4. Smash away the scornful for us, Indra. Hold down those who battle us.
   Who assails us, make him go to lower darkness.
5. Away with the thought of him who hates (us), Indra; away with the deadly weapon of the one who seeks to despoil (us).
   Extend shelter (to us) from battle fury. Keep the deadly weapon a wide way away.

X.153 (979) Indra

Devajāmaya Indramātaraḥ
5 verses: gāyatrī

The first verse of this hymn presents a tender image of unidentified females rocking the baby Indra, and verse 2 continues with a more conventional treatment of his birth. But the birth motif disappears (except for an attenuated version in vs. 5c): the hymn then continues with standard praise of his powers—the word *ójas* "might" is positioned prominently in four of the five verses (2–5).

1. Rocking (him), the busy women attend upon the new-born Indra,
   receiving (him) as their share of the abundance of heroes.
2. You, Indra, were born from power, from strength, from might.
   You, bull, are really a bull.
3. You, Indra, are the smasher of Vr̥tra. You spread out the midspace.
   You propped up heaven with your might.
4. You, Indra, carry in your arms the chant for joint enjoyment,
   while sharpening your mace with your might.
5. You, Indra, dominate all created things by your might.
   You came into being throughout all the worlds.

X.154 (980) To a Dead Man

Yamī
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn has a parallel in the Atharvaveda (XVIIII.2.14–18), where it is found among the funeral verses, and in the ritual sūtras it is used at the burning of the corpse. Each verse describes the character and habits of the distinguished forefathers now resident in the other world, and ends with a refrain urging the dead man to go and join them there.

1. Soma purifies himself for some; others reverently approach ghee.
   Those for whom honey flows forth—right to them let him go now.
2. Those who were unassailable because of their fervor, who have gone to the sun because of their fervor,
   who have made their own fervor into greatness—right to them let him go now.
3. Those who fight in prize-contests, who as champions abandon their bodies,
   or who confer a thousand priestly gifts—right to them let him go now.
4. Also those ancients who were servers of truth, truthful, strong through truth,
   the forefathers full of fervor, o Yama—right to them let him go now.
5. The poets of a thousand devices who protect the sun,
   the seers full of fervor, o Yama—to those born of fervor let him go now.

X.155 (981) Spell to Remove Misfortune (1, 4), Brahmaṇaspati (2–3), All Gods (5) [Against a Witch]

Śirimbiṭha Bhāradvāja
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

A type of female demon known as the Sadān(u)vā is the target of this Atharvan-type hymn; the Sadānvā is found only here in the R̥gveda, but is well represented in the Atharvaveda (AVŚ II.14, AVP II.4, V.1 and 9, VI.8.1, etc.; see further discussion and references in Zehnder 1999, Lubotsky 2002, Griffiths 2009 ad locc.). The Sadānvās are monumentally ugly (vs. 1) and seem to pose a threat especially to unborn children (vs. 2) and, in the Atharvaveda passages, to the household and livestock in general. In this hymn they are also sexually menacing and sexually repulsive (vs. 4).

In the first three verses the Sadānvā is attacked and sent away in good Atharvan fashion, but the hymn takes another rhetorical turn starting in verse 4, which announces the defeat of Indra's rivals in the high style of a victory paean, to the

apparent accompaniment of the Sadānvās beating their breasts in stylized mourning. And in verse 5 the defeat of the hostile forces has been effected not by an Atharvan-like charm, as in the earlier parts of the hymn, but by ritual activity on the sacrificial ground and by the creation of "fame" among the gods—both features that are associated with the more solemn R̥gvedic priestly and martial ethic. This shift in diction and attitude is striking, and it may have been felt necessary (or at least desirable) to "R̥gvedify" the charm when it was incorporated into the R̥gveda collection.

1. You one-eyed, deformed demoness, go to the mountain—you Sadānvā.
   With the warriors of Śirimbiṭha, with them we banish you.
2. She is banished from here, banished from yonder, having assailed all fetuses.
   Go at the demoness, o sharp-horned Brahmaṇaspati, and gore her.
3. That piece of wood over there that floats to the farther shore of the river with no man at the helm,
   grab hold of that, you with your evil jaws: with it go in the farther distance.
4. When you women with rusty "boxes" [=genitals], leaning forward, *beat your breast,
   slain were all the rivals of Indra—with their ejaculations ["spurts"] (dissipated like) bubbles.
5. These (men) here have led the cow around; they have taken the fire around.
   They have made themselves fame among the gods. Who will venture against them?

X.156 (982) Agni

Ketu Āgneya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The ritual setting for this hymn is given in verses 4–5: the kindling of fire at sunrise. The first three verses express the hope that this kindling of the fire will bring goods to the ritual participants, an oblique reference to the distribution of the priestly gifts at the Morning Pressing. This blatant desire for reward is somewhat camouflaged by couching it in terms of contests (vs. 1), cattle raids (vs. 2), and chariot racing (vs. 3).

1. Let our thoughts spur Agni on, like a swift span in the contests;
   with him might we win prize after prize.
2. The weapon with which we will make the cows our own by your help, o Agni,
   spur that on—to give us bounties.

3. Agni, bring here brawny wealth, broad and rich in cows and horses.
   Lubricate the wheel-nave, make the niggard roll.
4. Agni, you make the unaging heavenly body, the sun, mount in heaven,
   as you establish light for the peoples.
5. Agni, you are the beacon of the clans, dearest, fairest lap-child.
   Awaken, as you establish vitality for your praiser.

X.157 (983) All Gods

Bhuvana Āptya or Sādhana Bhauvana
5 verses: dvipadā triṣṭubh

Short and simple, this hymn calls for help and cooperation from Indra and a variety of gods in the first three verses. The last two verses are notable for what is probably the only reflection in the R̥gveda of that corporate entity, the Asuras, and of the eternal hostility between them and the Devas ("gods"), ubiquitous in middle Vedic and providing a major mythological cycle in those texts. Elsewhere in the R̥gveda the word *ásura* generally means "lord" and is applied to gods as well as to humans, viewed positively or negatively. It is only in this very late hymn that we see the germ of the later division of divine beings into the two inimical moieties of Devas and Asuras. For further on this question, which has important implications for Indo-Iranian as well as Vedic religion, see Wash Edward Hale (1986) as well as the discussion in our introduction and passim.

1. These living worlds here let us bring to success—we and Indra and all
   the gods.
2. Our sacrifice and our own body and our offspring may Indra, along with
   the Ādityas, set in order.
3. Along with the Ādityas, let Indra, flocking with the Maruts, be the helper
   of our bodies.
4. The gods upon having smashed the Asuras when they came—the gods
   guarding their own godhood—
5. Led the ray [=sun] to face toward (us) with their skills. Just after that
   they surveyed their vigorous self-power.

X.158 (984) Sūrya

Cakṣus Saurya
5 verses: gāyatrī

The sun as the eye in heaven, which enables us to see ourselves and the world, is the theme of this hymn, especially of the last three verses (3–5). The first verse is

a request for universal protection in all parts of the cosmos; the ablative ("from") phrases are ambiguous: they may refer to hostile forces located in the various parts of the cosmos, or to the locations from which the protectors are exercising their function. The second verse to Savitar continues the protection theme, but otherwise ill fits the hymn and may be here because of Savitar's role in verse 3.

The given name assigned to the poet by the Anukramaṇī, Cakṣus, is simply adopted from the common noun *cákṣus* "eye" found repeatedly in verses 3–4; his patronymic means "Son of Sūrya."

1. Let the Sun protect us from heaven, the Wind from the midspace;
   let Agni (protect) us from the earthly ones.
2. I shall find pleasure in you, o Savitar, whose flaring is worth a hundred impulsions [/soma-pressings].
   Protect us from the heavenly missile as it flies.
3. The eye [=sun] (let) god Savitar (place) for us, and the eye (let) the Mountain;
   the eye let the Placer place for us.
4. Place the eye for our eyeing, the eye for us to see for ourselves.
   May we look at this (world) both whole and distinct.
5. May we look toward you, wholly good to see, o Sun.
   May we, (though) we have the eyes of men [/(because) we possess the "eye of men" (=sun)], see distinctly.

X.159 (985) Against Cowives

Śacī Paulomī
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like X.145 this hymn is in the voice of a woman, speaking in the 1st person, against her cowives. But, whereas in X.145 she was in the act of performing the spell with which she hoped to vanquish her cowife, in this hymn her triumph is complete. She recites a victory paean, in the appropriate high rhetorical style—albeit with some dips into the vernacular, such as the diminutivized derivative of the personal pronoun in verse 1, *māmaká* "li'l ole me." It is worth noting that in verse 3 she extends her triumph to her sons and her daughter; as the early parts of the Rāmāyaṇa teach us, one of the most important reasons that cowives plot against each other is to secure preferment for their children.

1. Up has gone yonder sun; up this good fortune of li'l ole me.
   I, a cunning woman, now have gained victory over my husband, (so that I am) victorious.
2. I am the beacon; I am the head; I am the powerful debater.
   Only my will should my husband follow, when I am victorious.

3. My sons are rival-smiters, and my daughter is a wide ruler.
   And I am a complete conqueror. To my husband my signal-call is the highest.
4. The oblation through which Indra, when he performed it, became the highest brilliant one,
   that (oblation) I have now performed, o gods: I have therefore become without cowives.
5. Without cowives, smiting cowives, conquering, overcoming—
   I have ripped off the luster of the other women, like the gifts of the feckless.
6. I have completely conquered them, overcoming the cowives,
   so that I will rule widely over this hero and over his people.

X.160 (986) Indra

Purāṇa Vāiśvāmitra
5 verses: triṣṭubh

A straightforward invitation to soma-drinking, also expressing the usual fear that Indra will attend another sacrifice (vs. 1) and the usual smug awareness that a non-presser will be punished (vs. 4). According to the Anukramaṇī, the poet is a descendant of the Viśvāmitras, and the last two words of the hymn, *śunáṃ huvema* "for blessing we would invoke" are the first two words of the Viśvāmitra clan refrain, found in most of the Viśvāmitra triṣṭubh Indra hymns (III.30.22, etc.).

1. Drink of this sharp vitalizing (soma). Here unhitch your two fallow bays, chariot and all.
   O Indra, let the other sacrificers not stop you: yours are these pressed (soma drinks) here.
2. Yours are those (already) pressed and yours are those to be pressed. You do the swelling hymns call hither.
   O Indra, enjoying this pressing today, knowing everything, drink the soma here.
3. The man who with willing mind, with his whole heart, with desire for the gods, presses soma for him,
   Indra does not give away *his* cows. He [=presser] makes (his soma) acclaimed and dear to him [=Indra].
4. That one becomes spied out by him—the rich man who does not press soma for him.
   The bounteous one holds him out by the elbow [=at arm's length?].
   The one without precedent [=Indra] smites the haters of sacred formulations.

5. Seeking horses, seeking cows, seeking prizes, we call upon you to come right up to us.
   Attending to your new benevolence, we would invoke you for blessing, Indra.

X.161 (987) Against Disease

Yakṣmanāśana Prājāpatya
5 verses: triṣṭubh, except anuṣṭubh 5

With Atharvaveda parallels (AVŚ III.11.1–4, VIII.1.20; AVP I.62), this charm announces the restoration to life, indeed long life, of a man who has succumbed to some disease or other (vs. 1).

1. I release you, with an oblation, to living, from the unknown disease, from the kingly disease.
   Or if a Grabber has truly grabbed him in this way, from her, o Indra and Agni, release him.
2. If his lifetime is exhausted, or he is (already) departed, or if he has just gone down to the face of death,
   I bring him here from the lap of Dissolution. I have redeemed him for a hundred autumns.
3. With an oblation with a thousand eyes, conferring a hundred autumns and a hundred lifetimes, I have brought him here,
   so that Indra will lead him through a hundred autumns to the far shore of all difficult going.
4. Live in strength for a hundred autumns, a hundred winters, and a hundred springs.
   For a hundred (years) let Indra and Agni, Savitar, and Bṛhaspati restore him, with an oblation conferring a hundred lifetimes.
5. I have brought you here; I have found you. You have come here again, o you who are new again.
   O you with hale limbs, I have found your eye hale and your lifetime whole.

X.162 (988) Against Miscarriage

Rakṣohan Brāhma
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This charm is meant to deflect the dangers of miscarriage or harm to the embryo in any stage, including immediately after birth. The stages of pregnancy are nicely

laid out in verse 3, a good example of the indirect means by which we can gain information about Vedic people's knowledge and conceptualization of "real life." The methods by which the "ill-named affliction" might gain access to the fetus are graphically depicted in verses 4–6. In verse 5 it is somewhat startling that masquerading as a brother (in addition to husband or lover) would give intimate access to the pregnant woman; this whiff of incest is reminiscent of the situation between the siblings Yama and Yamī in X.10.

1. In concert with a sacred formulation let Agni, demon-smasher, repel from here
   whatever evil-named affliction lies on your embryo, in your womb.
2. Whatever evil-named affliction lies on your embryo, in your womb,
   Agni, along with a sacred formulation, has banished the flesh-eater.
3. Who smites your (embryo) as it flies, when it is emplanted, as it squirms,
   who intends to smite your (embryo) when it is just born, that one we banish from here.
4. Who pries apart your thighs, lies between the married couple,
   who licks within your womb, that one we banish from here.
5. Who, having become brother, husband, lover, goes down on you,
   who intends to smite your offspring, that one we banish from here.
6. Who, having stupefied you with sleep, with darkness, goes down on you,
   who intends to smite your offspring, that one we banish from here.

X.163 (989) Against Disease

Vivṛhan Kāśyapa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

Like X.161, this is another charm against disease with Atharvan parallels (AVŚ II.33, AVP IV.7). This hymn provides us with what we might term a body-part litany. The officiant declares the removal of disease from a series of related body parts in each verse, each associated with a particular area of the body—another valuable window on how Vedic peoples divided up and named reality. Although the names of the more standard body parts (eyes, ears, etc.) are well known and have well-established cognates, the identification of some of the more obscure terms is uncertain, though the locational association narrows the range of possibilities.

1. From your eyes, your nostrils, your ears, your chin,
   I tear the disease of the head out of you—from your brain, your tongue.
2. From your neck(bones?), the (bones of the?) nape of your neck, your vertebrae, your backbone,
   I tear the disease of the torso out of you—from your shoulders, from your arms.

3. From your entrails, your guts, your rectum, your heart,
   I tear out the disease—from your kidneys, your liver, your intestines.
4. From your thighs, your knee-sockets, your heels, the front of your feet,
   I tear out the disease—from your hips, your backside, your buttocks.
5. From your urinator, your love-maker, your hair, your nails,
   I tear this disease here out—from your whole body.
6. From every limb, from every hair, what is born in every joint,
   I tear this disease here out—from your whole body.

X.164 (990) Against Nightmare

Pracetas Āṅgirasa
5 verses: anuṣṭubh 1, 2, 4, triṣṭubh 3, paṅkti 5

The Anukramaṇī labels this hymn *duḥsvapnaghnam*, literally "destroying bad dreams," while Geldner titles it "Absolution from Sins" and Renou simply "Expiation." None of these characterizations quite captures the varied semantic field of this brief hymn. It begins with the curt dismissal of an otherwise unknown "Lord of Thought" (or "Lord of Mind"), ordering him to go far away and speak to the goddess Dissolution (Nirr̥ti), who presides over chaos and calamity. The Lord of Thought is to provide her with some examples of men's thoughts, in verse 2. These examples seem to be the sort of harmless self-delusions whereby people reassure themselves that all is going well for them. But in verses 3 and 4 the verbal behavior becomes less innocent—culminating in one of the worst offenses in Vedic India (and indeed Indo-Iranian), deceit (vs. 4). We ask various gods, including Indra "Lord of the Sacred Formulation" (voc. *brahmaṇas pate*), presumably Indra in his role as Br̥haspati, to distance these offenses from us. The final verse celebrates the success of this request and expresses our desire that all such offenses be visited on our enemy.

The unifying theme of the hymn is thus all sorts of mental and verbal action, whether harmless or hostile, whether done consciously (awake) or not (asleep), or even both (the "waking dream" of vs. 5).

1. Go away, o Lord of Thought—stride away; move far away.
   (When) far away, announce to Dissolution: "Of many kinds is the
   thought of the living.
2. "Lucky is the choice they make; lucky the right (horse) they yoke;
   lucky the eye (they keep) on the son of Vivasvant [=Yama] (—or so they
   think). In many places is the thought of the living."
3. Whatever pass we've reached by hope, by blame, by curse, when awake or
   sleeping.
   let Agni put away, at a distance from us, all those things ill-done and
   unpleasing.

4. O Indra, lord of the sacred formulation, if we practice deceit,
   let the attentive Āṅgiras protect us from the coercion of those who hate us.
5. We have conquered today, and we have won: we have become without offense.
   The waking dream, the evil intent—let it land on him whom we hate, let it land on him who hates us.

X.165 (991) All Gods (Bird of Ill Omen)

Kapota Nairr̥ta
5 verses: triṣṭubh

Though the Anukramaṇī identifies the dedicands as the All Gods, the hymn is entirely devoted to countering the possible evil effects of a bird of ill-omen, the dove of death, sent as a messenger from Yama, the lord of the dead. Not surprisingly, given their style and contents, the verses of this hymn are found in variant form in the Atharvaveda (AVŚ VI.27, 29.1, 28.1).

1. O gods, when the dove, sent as a messenger of Dissolution, has come here to seek,
   we will chant to it, and we will perform expulsion. Let there be weal for our two-footed, weal for our four-footed.
2. Let the dove that has been sent be kindly to us; o gods, let the omen-bird be without offense in our house.
   Let Agni, the inspired poet, take pleasure in our oblation, and so let the winged missile avoid us.
3. The winged missile will not take us by deception. In the corner [?] it sets its footprint in the fireplace.
   Let there be weal for our cattle and for our humans. Let the dove not harm us here, o gods.
4. When the owl screeches, that comes to nothing; likewise when the dove set its footprint in the fire.
   The one for whom it was sent forth as messenger—to that one let there be reverence: to Yama, (who is) Death.
5. With (this) verse give the dove a push. Rejoicing in refreshment, lead your cow around,
   effacing all difficulties. Having left for us our strengthening nourishment, it will fly away the fastest in flight.

X.166 (992) Against Rivals

Ṛṣabha Vairāja or Ṛṣabha Śākvara
5 verses: anuṣṭubh, except mahāpaṅkti 5

The extremely aggressive 1st-person speaker of this hymn proclaims his triumph over his rivals and their utter humiliation. Using the well-nigh universal tropes of high and low, he repeatedly emphasizes the spatial (and thus conceptual) position of his defeated enemies, who are literally beneath his feet (vss. 2, 5; see also vss. 3–4). Verse 4 is notable for the trio of attributes that the speaker seizes from his rivals, a set that easily accommodates a trifunctional (Dumézilian) analysis: "cognition" as the higher mental power appropriate to the priestly First Function, "commandment" representative of the warrior-ruler Second Function, and "company, assembly" the Third Function mass of followers. Although we are not over-sympathetic to the Dumézilian paradigm, this particular passage gains resonance from such an analysis.

1. Make me bull over my equals, widely victorious over my rivals,
   smiter of my rivals, wide-ruling cattle-lord of cattle.
2. I am a smiter of rivals, like Indra, unharmable, invulnerable.
   Beneath my feet are my rivals: all these here have been stood upon.
3. Right here I bind you, like the two ends of a bow with a bowstring.
   O Lord of Speech, drive these down, so that they will speak lower
      than me.
4. I have come here on top, with Viśvakarman as my foundation.
   I take for myself your cognition, your commandment, and your
      assembled company.
5. Having taken for myself your yoking up [=war] and your peace, might
      I become the highest. I have trampled on your head.
   From beneath my feet, lift up your speech to me, like frogs from the
      water, like frogs from the water.

X.167 (993) Indra (1–2, 4), Assorted Divinities (3)

Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni
4 verses: jagatī

A fairly conventional invitation to the soma sacrifice. One of Indra's great deeds, the conquering of the sun, is alluded to (vss. 1–2), and already in verse 1 he is asked for wealth. The final verse is spoken by Indra himself, who accepts both the soma and the praise while recognizing that he is entitled to these offerings only if he provides good things in return. One noteworthy feature is the poet-priest's claim to have himself consumed copious amounts of soma (vs. 4).

1. This honey is poured around for you, Indra: you rule over the tub of pressed soma.
   Make for us wealth consisting of many heroes. Having heated up your heat all around, you conquered the sun.
2. The conqueror of the sun who finds great exhilaration in the soma-stalk do we call here to the pressings—the all-around able one.
   Take notice of this sacrifice of ours here. Come here! We beseech the bounteous one who conquers his opponents.
3. Under the ordinance of King Soma and King Varuṇa and under the protection of Bṛhaspati and Anumati,
   today at our praise invocation of you, bounteous one, I consumed tubs (of soma), you establisher and regulator.
4. [Indra:] Urged on, I have done my own consuming at the vat, and as the foremost patron, I sweep up this praise song,
   if at the pressing I have come back to you two, Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, in your house with the winnings.

X.168 (994) Vāyu

Anila Vātāyana
4 verses: triṣṭubh

As with X.186, the Anukramaṇī identifies the deity of the hymn as Vāyu, the god of wind who has been integrated into the ritual system, as the first god, with Indra, to receive the soma drink at the Morning Pressing. But again, as in X.186, the hymn only mentions Vāta, a god of wind with more physical and natural characteristics of wind than Vāyu and little or no ritual profile. Nonetheless, Vāta is given full-dress eulogistic treatment in this little hymn: The first verse begins with his name, and the opening, "now the greatness [acc.] of Wind..." (*vā́tasya nú mahimā́nam*...), recalls celebratory openings like I.32.1 *índrasya nú vīryā̀ṇi*... "now the heroic deeds of Indra..."). The final pāda (vs. 4d) is a standard formula of homage, with the recipient in the dative ("to him, to Wind...") and an instrumental of the type of offering ("with our oblation"), ending with the 1st plural optative *vidhema* "might we do honor"); see numerous parallels, including VIII.48.12–13, I.121.1–9.

In between the swift progress of Wind, his chariot, and his retinue (which we consider to be the eddies and gusts that are characteristic of any strong wind) is nicely described.

1. Now (I shall proclaim) the greatness of Wind and of his chariot: shattering as he goes; thundering is his sound.
   Touching heaven as he drives, turning things red, and tossing up dust from the earth as he goes.

2. The dispersed eddies of the Wind press forward together following (him).
   They go to him, like girls to a festive gathering.
   Yoked together with them on the same chariot, the god speeds on as
   king of this whole world.
3. Speeding along the paths in the midspace, he does not settle down on any
   single day.
   Comrade of the waters, the first-born abiding by truth—where was he
   born? from where has he arisen?
4. The breath of the gods, the embryo of the world, this god wanders as he
   wishes.
   Only his sounds are heard, not his form. To him, to the Wind, we would
   do honor with our oblation.

X.169 (995) Cows

Śabara Kākṣīvata
4 verses: triṣṭubh

For the protection, thriving, and safe return of the cows, invoking a formidable range of gods to ensure these goals. In later ritual the first two verses are spoken when the cows go to pasture, the latter two when they return home.

1. Let the wind, joy itself, blow to the ruddy ones. Let them crop plants full
   of nourishment.
   Let them drink (waters) full of fat, providing riches to the living. Setting
   them loose, Rudra, be merciful to our food on the hoof.
2. Those who are of the same color, of different colors, of one color, whose
   names Agni knows because of the sacrifice,
   whom the Aṅgirases brought here by their fervent heat—to those, o
   Parjanya, extend great shelter.
3. Who raised their own body up among the gods (as oblation), of whom
   Soma knows all the colors,
   swelling with milk, rich in offspring, grant them to us in our stable, Indra.
4. Prajāpati, having given them to me, in concord with all the gods and the
   forefathers,
   has sent them here, being well-disposed, to our stable. Might we reside
   together with their offspring.

X.170 (996) Sūrya

Vibhrāj Saurya
4 verses: jagatī, except āstārapaṅkti 4

This hymn celebrates the god Sun, or more specifically his light, in terms more usually applied to heroic warrior-gods like Indra.

1. Let the lofty (light) blazing forth drink the somian honey, imparting an unswerving lifetime on the lord of the sacrifice—
   he who, sped by the wind, stands guard by himself, he fosters the creatures; he rules [/shines] widely in many places.
2. The lofty (light) blazing forth, well supported, best winner of prizes, real, is fitted into the foundation, the buttress of heaven.
   Smasher of foes, smasher of obstacles, best smasher of Dasyus, the light has been born, the smasher of lords, smasher of rivals.
3. Here is the fairest, the highest light of lights: the lofty one is called all-conquering, wealth-conquering.
   The all-blazing, greatly blazing Sun spreads his broad might, his unshakeable strength to be seen.
4. Flashing forth with your light, as the Sun you went to the luminous realm of heaven,
   you by whom all these worlds are supported here, you who accomplish all work, who possess all that is proper for gods.

X.171 (997) Indra

Iṭa Bhārgava
4 verses: gāyatrī

This brief hymn makes allusion to four unknown or little-known myths involving Indra, one per verse. All four verses begin with *t(u)vám* "you," and three of the four (not vs. 2) contain a vocative addressed to Indra—repetitions that provide some unity to a hymn made up of fragments.

1. You, Indra—you furthered this chariot of Iṭat the presser.
   You heard the call of the one who has soma.
2. You pulled the head of the raging Battler off from his skin.
   You went to the house of the one who has soma.
3. You, Indra—this mortal Venya
   you made slack in an instant, for Āstrabudhna, who had it in mind.
4. You, Indra—set this sun in front, though it is behind,
   even athwart the will of the gods.

X.172 (998) Dawn

Saṃvarta Āṅgirasa
4 verses: dvipadā virāj

Although the Anukramaṇī identifies the divinity of this hymn as Dawn, only the last verse (4) clearly belongs to her, and, at least in verse 2, the masculine adjectives preclude Dawn as subject. Commentators have suggested other deities: Dawn (vs. 1), Sūrya (vs. 2), Agni (vs. 3), Dawn (vs. 4), or Sūrya (vss. 1–3). These particular identifications cannot be confirmed, but it *is* clear that this is a hymn appropriate to early morning. In verse 2 the subject awakens mortals. Though verse 1 is less clear, the cows there are on the move after giving milk (in our interpretation): as real cows, they are going to pasture after the morning milking; as dawn cows they are following the track of the sun out of the east and across the sky, having filled the sky with their milky light. In the third verse the sacrifice is begun, as is appropriate at dawn. And finally in verse 4 Dawn makes an explicit appearance upon her birth.

1. Drive here along with your longing. The cows follow your track, when
   (they have given milk) with their udders.
2. Drive here with good insight, as the most bounteous one, along with those
   of good gifts, as you awaken the bountiful while aging the combatants.
3. Like those bringing food, having good gifts we lay out the thread (of
   sacrifice): let us perform sacrifice.
4. Dawn (rolls) out of the way the darkness of her sister (Night), rolls her
   track up in a ball, because she has been well born (just now).

X.173 (999) Praise of the King (Royal Consecration)

Dhruva Āṅgirasa
6 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn has long been seen as part of a royal consecration (Rājasūya, a term first found in the Atharvaveda), whatever that rite would have looked like in late R̥gvedic times. The keyword of the hymn is *dhruvá* "firm"—firmness being the quality most desired in the royal candidate—and in fact the Anukramaṇī has extracted this word for the name of the poet. The affirmation of the chosen king by both the human clans (*viś*, vss. 1, 6) and various gods is required. Among the gods we find Indra, the archetypal warrior king (vss. 2, 5–6), and Varuṇa, the archetypal peacetime king (vs. 5). (For these two aspects of kingship, divided between the two gods, see especially IV.42.) In addition there are the ritually connected gods, who would officiate at the consecration ceremony: Brahmaṇaspati (vs. 3)/Br̥haspati (vs. 5), who represent the verbal portion, and Agni (vs. 5) and Soma (vs. 3), who participate in the physical portion. Soma, as ritual substance, is found in verse 6, which effects the king's installation. The hymn has parallels in both recensions of the Atharvaveda, and elsewhere in Vedic literature.

1. I have brought you here: be among (us). Stand firm, without wavering.
   Let all the clans want you. Let kingship not fall away from you.
2. Be only here; do not budge—unwavering like a mountain.
   Like Indra, stand firm here; here uphold your kingship.
3. This one here has Indra upheld—firm with a firm oblation.
   For him Soma will bear witness; for him Brahmaṇaspati.
4. Firm is heaven, firm the earth, firm these mountains here.
   Firm all this animate world, firm right here this king of the clans.
5. Firm let King Varuṇa, firm let God Bṛhaspati,
   firm let both Indra and Agni uphold your kingship—firm!
6. We touch firm soma with a firm oblation.
   And now Indra will make the clans bring tribute only to you.

X.174 (1000) Praise of the King

Abhīvarta Āṅgirasa
5 verses: anuṣṭubh

A companion piece to the preceding consecration hymn, but one that focuses only on the combative and confrontational aspects of kingship. Here the signature idiom is *abhí-√vṛt* "roll over," again providing the Anukramaṇī's poet's name. The king's ability to "roll over" and crush his opponents as Indra did, leaving him the only one standing, is celebrated and ritually effected with an oblation named with the idiom and associated with Indra (vss. 1, 4).

1. The Over-rolling oblation with which Indra rolled over (his enemies),
   with that, o Brahmaṇaspati, make us roll to kingship.
2. Having rolled over the rivals, over those who are hostile to us,
   stand over the one who gives battle, over the one who is envious of us.
3. God Savitar has made you—Soma has made you roll over—
   made you roll over all creatures, so that you will be an Over-roller.
4. The oblation through which Indra, when he performed it, became the
   highest brilliant one,
   that (oblation) I have now performed, o gods: I have therefore become
   without rivals.
5. Without rivals, rival-smiting, (rolling) to kingship, widely victorious—
   so that I will rule widely over these creatures and over the people.

X.175 (1001) Pressing Stones

Ūrdhvagrāvan Āṅgirasa
4 verses: gāyatrī

This third hymn to the pressing stones (the others being X.76 and X.94) has none of the rhetorical ambition or vividness of the other two. It begins and ends (vss. 1,

4) with an appeal to the god Savitar, literally "the Impeller," to provide the impulsion to set the stones to pressing.

1. Let god Savitar propel you forth according to his ordinance, o pressing stones.
   Yoke yourselves to the chariot-poles. Press!
2. O pressing stones, ward off misfortune, off ill-will.
   Make the ruddy ones [=soma plants] into a remedy.
3. The pressing stones joined in fellowship display their greatness on the lower (stones),
   providing bullish power to the bull.
4. O pressing stones, let god Savitar now propel you according to ordinance
   for the sacrificer who presses (soma).

X.176 (1002) Agni [or, according to the Anukramaṇī, R̥bhus (1), Agni (2–4)]

Sūnu Ārbhava
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except gāyatrī 2

A simple hymn treating the ritual fire on its first appearance. The only real difficulty is found in verse 4. Although the precise meaning of the first hemistich is disputed, it seems to these readers that this verse almost paradoxically frees Agni from his birth as a god in order to situate him firmly in the mortal sphere, where human life takes place: the theme of Agni's "dual citizenship" is a common one in the R̥gveda.

1. The sons of the R̥bhus [=flames], their circles, bellow out loftily—
   they who, deriving all nourishment, feed upon (heaven and) earth as if on a mother cow.
2. Bring forward the god Jātavedas with a godly insight.
   He will convey our oblations in their proper order.
3. This Hotar right here, seeking the gods, is led forth to sacrifice.
   Decked out like the chariot of a traveler, he comes into view, glowing with heat, in his own person.
4. This Agni delivers himself from his immortal birth, as it were.
   Stronger even than strength, the god was created for living.

X.177 (1003) Pataṃga

Pataṃga Prājāpatya
3 verses: jagatī 1, triṣṭubh 2–3

An enigmatic hymn, mystically representing inspired poetic thought and visionary knowledge as a bird, clothed in light, seen inwardly by enlightened poets and

priests. The images, though not always clear, echo many found in similarly mystical treatments of poetic inspiration, such as the famous Vena hymn (X.123), and make a powerful impression.

1. The bird, anointed with the magic power of the lord, do those attentive to poetic inspiration see with heart and mind.
   The sage poets espy it within the sea; the ritual experts seek the footprint of the light beams.
2. The bird carries speech by mind. The Gandharva spoke it within the womb.
   The sage poets protect the flashing, reverberating inspired thought in the footprint of truth.
3. I saw the cowherd who never settles down, roaming back and forth along the paths.
   Clothing himself in those that (alternately) converge and diverge [=light beams?], he keeps rolling along within the living worlds.

X.178 (1004) Tārkṣya

Ariṣṭanemi Tārkṣya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

A being named Tārkṣya is found in a few other places in Vedic literature, with varying identities. Here it seems to be the name of a prodigious and mythical racehorse, much like Dadhikrā(van) (see IV.38–40); indeed verse 3 here is a variant of the Dadhikrā verse IV.38.10. Both horses are associated with Trasadasyu, leader of the Pūrus: his association with Dadhikrā is announced directly in the first Dadhikrā verse (IV.38.1), whereas his association with Tārkṣya is mediated through the horse's name, which is a vr̥ddhi derivative of Tr̥kṣi, himself a descendant of Trasadasyu (see VIII.22.7, see also VI.46.8).

1. This god-sped prizewinner, victorious overtaker of (other) chariots,
   him whose wheel-felly cannot be damaged, the swift one driving to battle—Tārkṣya would we summon here for our well-being.
2. Summoning his generosity again and again, like that of Indra, we would board him like a boat for our well-being.
   O you two who are broad like the two wide (worlds), voluminous and deep—let us not suffer harm of you in our coming nor in our going.
3. Who just in a single day stretches across the five peoples with his vast power, like the sun across the waters with his light,
   his is the charge that wins thousands, that wins hundreds. They do not block him, anymore than a youthful arrow.

X.179 (1005) Indra

Śibi Auśīnara (1), Pratardana Daivodāsi (2), Vasumanas Rauhidaśva (3)
3 verses: anuṣṭubh 1, triṣṭubh 2–3

This hymn is later used for the dadhi-gharma (sour milk and hot milk) oblation at the midday libation associated with the Pravargya ritual, and indeed, unlike many R̥gvedic passages pressed into service in middle Vedic śrauta rituals, it seems to have been composed for just this purpose. The first verse invites the priests to assess the readiness of the libation; the second and third verses, later the Puro'nuvākyā and Yājyā respectively, invite Indra to the midday service and offer him the cooked portion, clearly identified in verse 3c.

1. Stand up, (you priests)! Look down on Indra's portion which is due.
   If it is cooked, pour it! If it is uncooked, wait!
2. The oblation is (now) cooked. Indra, fare forth here; the sun has arrived
   at the middle of its road.
   Your comrades await you with servings (of food), as a housekeeper
   awaits the master of the barnyard who is making his rounds.
3. (The oblation) in the udder is cooked, I think, and the one in the fire is
   cooked. Well cooked, I think, is also this newer truth [=hymn].
   O mace-bearing Indra, you who do many deeds—drink of the sour milk
   of the Midday Pressing, taking enjoyment of it.

X.180 (1006) Indra

Jaya Aindri
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Indra's victories over his (and our) enemies are the special focus of this hymn, but the poet does not fail to mention our interest in his gifts as well (vs. 1).

1. O much-summoned one, you have vanquished your rivals. Your
   tempestuous power is preeminent. Now let your giving be here:
   Indra, bring good things here along with the priestly gift. You are the
   master of rich rivers.
2. Like a fearsome wild beast, living in the mountains and roaming
   wherever it wants, you have come here from the farther distance.
   Having honed sharp your fang and your wheel-rim, Indra, carve apart
   your rivals. Shove aside the scornful.
3. Indra, you were born to dominion and to might worth winning, you bull
   of the settled domains.
   You drove away the people that are not allies. You made a wide
   wide-place for the gods.

X.181 (1007) All Gods

Pratha Vāsiṣṭha (1), Sapratha Bhāradvāja (2), Gharma Saurya (3)
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Like X.179 this hymn is tightly tied to the Pravargya ritual—in this case celebrating the great sāmans associated with that ritual, the Rathantara and the Bṛhat, and the gharma, the hot milk offering that is its high point.

1. Whose name is "Spread" and "Wide-spread," which is the oblation of the oblation in anuṣṭubh meter:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu has Vasiṣṭha carried here the Rathaṃtara.
2. They found what was placed beyond, what was the highest hidden domain of the sacrifice:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu, from Agni, has Bharadvāja brought here the Bṛhat.
3. They found, as they reflected with their mind, the yajus that sprang forth first, going the way of the gods:
   from the flashing Founder and from Savitar and Viṣṇu, from the sun, have they carried here the hot milk (gharma).

X.182 (1008) Bṛhaspati

Tapurmūrdhan Bārhaspatya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

Bṛhaspati, the master of ritual speech, is called upon to aid our speech, but also to punish all forms of evil speech and their speakers.

1. Let Bṛhaspati lead (our thought) across the difficult depths, but for the utterer of evil he will lead his thought back (against him).
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.
2. Let Narāśaṃsa help us at the Fore-offering; let the After-offering be luck for us at the invocations.
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.
3. Let him of scorching head scorch those who are demons; those who hate the sacred formulation are for his arrow to smite.
   – He hurls aside malediction and smites away ill-will; then he will create luck and life for the sacrificer.

X.183 (1009) For the Birth of a Son [To the Sacrificer (1), the Sacrificer's Wife (2), and the Hotar (3)]

Prajāvat Prājāpatya
3 verses: triṣṭubh

The first two verses present a fragment of dialogue, with patterned repetition, between a wife and a husband, preparatory to attempting to conceive a son. As Geldner points out, the situation seems to be similar to that depicted in I.179 (the Agastya–Lopāmudrā dialogue), with the husband ending a period of asceticism (see vs. 1b) and the wife eager for sex and its product, children. It thus conforms to the pattern common throughout Indian literature of the reluctant ascetic and the sexually aggressive female (see Jamison 1996a: 15–17 and passim), but in the short exchange here the husband seems more amenable than usual, and the rhetorical responsions between the two verses make the pair seem more attuned to each other. The final verse (3) is spoken by an unidentified spirit responsible for all sorts of fertility, who promises sons.

1. [Wife:] I saw you with my mind, as you became ever more cognizant with
 yours, you born from fervor, developed from fervor.
 Bestowing progeny here, wealth here, progenerate yourself with progeny,
 o you who desire sons.
2. [Husband:] I saw you with my mind, as you became ever more intent
 with yours, being in distress in your own body at your period.
 Up here, near to me. You should become a young woman (again).
 Progenerate yourself with progeny, o you lady desiring sons.
3. I placed the embryo in the plants, I within all creatures.
 I generated progeny on earth, I (will generate) sons for wives in the
 future.

X.184 (1010) Pregnancy/Birth Charm [To Assorted Divinities]

Tvaṣṭar Garbhakartar or Viṣṇu Prājāpatya
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This little charm follows naturally on the immediately preceding hymn. There a married couple prepares to have sex in order to conceive; here a range of gods and goddesses responsible for conception and safe pregnancy are called upon to ensure conception followed by a full-term birth.

1. Let Viṣṇu arrange the womb; let Tvaṣṭar carve the forms.
 Let Prajāpati pour out (the semen); let the Placer place the embryo
 in you.

2. Place the embryo, Sinīvālī; place the embryo, Sarasvatī.
   Let the Aśvins, the two lotus-garlanded gods, place the embryo for you.
3. The one that the Aśvins churned out of the two golden kindling sticks,
   that embryo of yours we call, to be born in the tenth month.

X.185 (1011) Aditi

Satyadhṛti Vāruṇi
3 verses: gāyatrī

This brief appeal for the help of the three most prominent Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, may have been placed here, after the two pregnancy charms, because it mentions their mother Aditi (vs. 3), whose prodigious pregnancies were legendary. Certainly the Anukramaṇī seems to have concluded something of the sort, since it identifies the divinity of the hymn as Aditi, though she appears only obliquely.

1. Great be the heavenly help of the three—of Mitra, of Aryaman,
   of Varuṇa—help difficult to assail.
2. For neither at home nor on wild ways
   does an evil-speaking cheater hold sway over them—
3. For whom the sons of Aditi hold forth inexhaustible light,
   for the mortal to live.

X.186 (1012) Vāyu

Ula Vātāyana
3 verses: gāyatrī

As with X.168, although the Anukramaṇī identifies the divinity of this hymn as Vāyu, he is only called Vāta "Wind" here. He is credited with the ability to provide healing (vs. 1) and, in all three verses, to keep us alive and prolong our lifetimes. This strong association between life and the wind must be mediated through the latter's identification (*bandhu*) with breath, although this identification is not made explicit in the hymn.

1. Let the wind blow hither a remedy, which is luck itself, joy itself, for
   our heart.
   He will lengthen our lifetimes.
2. O Wind, you are father to us, and brother, and comrade to us.
   Make us live.
3. What deposit of immortality has been deposited yonder in your house,
   o Wind,
   give us of that for us to live.

X.187 (1013) Agni

Vatsa Āgneya
5 verses: gāyatrī

Found in AVŚ VI.34, this unremarkable hymn contains a refrain that suggests the militant Agni, but only verse 3 develops this theme.

1. Rouse forth speech for Agni, for the bull of the settlements.
   He will carry us across hatreds.
2. Who from the distant distance shines across the wastelands,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
3. Who grinds down the demonic forces, the bull with flaming flame,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
4. Who looks at all creatures separately and sees them whole,
   he will carry us across hatreds.
5. Who on the far shore of this airy realm was born as flaming Agni,
   he will carry us across hatreds.

X.188 (1014) Agni Jātavedas

Śyena Āgneya
3 verses: gāyatrī

Another slight hymn to Agni, this time with his common epithet Jātavedas. The focus of this hymn is the sacrifice and Agni's role in it.

1. Spur forth now Jātavedas, the prizewinning horse,
   to sit here on this ritual grass of ours.
2. For this Jātavedas here, whose heroes are poets, who grants rewards,
   I rouse forth a great praise hymn.
3. The bright beams of Jātavedas that convey the oblation among the gods,
   with them let him impel our sacrifice.

X.189 (1015) Sārparājñī or Sūrya

Sārparājñī
3 verses: gāyatrī

The Anukramaṇī assigns this hymn either to Sūrya or to the shadowy figure Sārparājñī ([female] descendant of the Queen of the Snakes), who is also said to be its author. The former identification seems far more likely, or, rather, the hymn appears to be set at the dawn sacrifice and to play with the various sources of light

that compete and combine at that time: the sun and the ritual fire, as well as Dawn (vs. 2ab). The fire, and in part its counterpart the sun, is portrayed as a variety of animals: a (male) cow (vs. 1), a buffalo (vs. 2), and a bird. The association of speech with the bird is also found in the Pataṃga hymn (X.177) and probably reflects the importance of ritual speech at the dawn sacrifice. There are no signs of snakes, much less their queen.

1. This dappled cow has stridden here and sat in front of its mother
   and its father, as it goes forth toward the sun.
2. She moves within the realms of light, breathing in from his
   breathing-out.
   The buffalo has looked out across heaven.
3. He shines [/rules] over the thirty domains. Speech is established for
   the bird
   at each dawn and throughout the days.

X.190 (1016) Bhāvavṛttam ("Cosmogonic")

Aghamarṣaṇa Mādhuchandasa
3 verses: anuṣṭubh

This hymn presents a cosmogony with *tápas* "ascetic heat, fervor" as the ultimate origin of everything. The entities created and the order and source of their creation are curious and thought-provoking, but unlike the famous cosmogonic hymn X.129, there are no puzzles to decode.

1. Both truth and reality were born from heat when it was kindled.
   From that, night was born, and from that the undulating sea.
2. From the undulating sea was born the year,
   which distributes the days and nights and exerts its will over everyone
   who blinks [=mortals].
3. The Ordainer arranged, according to their proper order, sun and moon,
   heaven and earth, midspace and sunlight.

X.191 (1017) Agni (1), Unity (2–4)

Saṃvanana Āṅgirasa
4 verses: anuṣṭubh, except triṣṭubh 3

This last hymn in the Ṛgveda has a programmatic and propagandistic agenda. The Ṛgveda Saṃhitā ("Collection") has assembled the poetic products of numerous separate clans, who also had their own cultic practices and who presumably

coexisted in an uneasy vacillation between semi-hostility and wary cooperation. This hymn collection was produced under the new circumstances of a centralized (or centralizing) sociopolitical regime, generally considered to be the Kuru kings, which sought to impose (or encourage) a standardized, shared ritual culture—the R̥gveda collection being its most enduring product—that would also support the political unification.

The hymn begins (vs. 1) with the ritual fire, which brings all the Ārya together, including those who don't seem to want it (1b), and is the most visible representation of the underlying unity of their ritual praxis. There's an implicit warning in this verse: the ritual fire itself will appropriate the goods of any hold-outs. Verse 2 then provides a positive model: like the gods, who put aside their differences to take their common shares in the sacrifice, we should make a common sacrifice (which, implicitly it is said, will make us more successful, once we no long have to compete among ourselves all the time). Verse 3 outlines the results of the program to devise a standardized ritual shared by all. The second half of this verse is a virtual speech act: the speaker performs the two fundamental components of the ritual—ritual speech (the mantra) and ritual action (the oblation)—thus by this announcement effectively creating the new, shared ritual. Verse 4 promises that the results will be worth the effort. For further discussion, see Proferes (2007: 11 and passim).

1. Over and over, o Agni, you bull, you wrest together all things from the stranger.
   You are kindled in the footprint of refreshment. Bring goods here to us.
2. Come together, speak together; together let your thoughts agree,
   just as the gods of long ago, coming to an agreement together, reverently approach their sacrificial portion.
3. Common to them all is the solemn utterance, common the assembly, common their thought along with their perception.
   I (hereby) utter an utterance common to you all on your behalf; with an oblation common to you all I offer on your behalf.
4. Common is your purpose; common your hearts;
   let your thought be common, so that it will go well for you together.

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DEITIES AND POETS OF THE ṚGVEDA, FOLLOWING THE ANUKRAMAṆĪ

Maṇḍala I

I.1	Agni	Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
I.2	Vāyu (1–3), Indra and Vāyu (4–6), Mitra and Varuṇa (7–9)	____
I.3	Aśvins (1–3), Indra (4–6), All Gods (7–9), Sarasvatī (10–12)	____
I.4	Indra	____
I.5	____	____
I.6	Indra (1–3, 10), Maruts (4, 6, 8, 9), Maruts and Indra (5, 7)	____
I.7	Indra	____
I.8	____	____
I.9	____	____
I.10	____	____
I.11	____	Jetar Mādhuchandasa
I.12	Agni	Medhātithi Kāṇva
I.13	Āprī	____
I.14	All Gods	____
I.15	Sequential Deities	____
I.16	Indra	____
I.17	Indra and Varuṇa	____
I.18	Brahmaṇaspati (1–3), Brahmaṇaspati, Indra, and Soma (4), the Same with Dakṣiṇā (5), Sadaspati (6–8), Sadaspati or Narāśaṃsa (9)	____
I.19	Agni and the Maruts	____
I.20	Ṛbhus	____
I.21	Indra and Agni	____
I.22	Aśvins (1–4), Savitar (5–8), Agni (9–10), Gods (11), Indrāṇi, Varuṇānī, Agnāyī (12), Heaven and Earth (13–14), Earth (15), Viṣṇu or Gods (16), Viṣṇu (17–21)	____
I.23	Vāyu (1), Indra and Vāyu (2–3), Mitra and Varuṇa (4–6), Indra Marutvant (7–9), All Gods (10–12), Pūṣan (13–15), Waters (16–23ab), Agni (23cd–24)	____
I.24	Ka (1), Agni (2), Savitar (3–4), Savitar or Bhaga (5), Varuṇa (6–10)	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
I.25	Varuṇa	____
I.26	Agni	____
I.27	Agni (1–12), Gods (13)	____
I.28	Indra (1–4), the Mortar (5–6), the Mortar and Pestle (7–8), Prajāpati Hariścandra or the Soma-Pressing Hide (9)	____

I.29	Indra	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
I.30	Indra (1–16), Aśvins (17–19), Dawn (20–22)	____
I.31	Agni	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
I.32	Indra	____
I.33	____	____
I.34	Aśvins	____
I.35	Agni, Mitra and Varuṇa, Rātrī, and Savitar (1), Savitar (2–11)	____
I.36	Agni	Kaṇva Ghaura
I.37	Maruts	____
I.38	____	____
I.39	____	____
I.40	Brahmaṇaspati	____
I.41	Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman (1–3, 7–9), Ādityas (4–6)	____
I.42	Pūṣan	____
I.43	Rudra (1–2, 4–6), Rudra, Mitra and Varuṇa (3), Soma (7–9)	____
I.44	Agni, Aśvins, Dawn (1–2), Agni (3–14)	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
I.45	Agni (1–10ab), Gods (10cd)	____
I.46	Aśvins	____
I.47	____	____
I.48	Dawn	____
I.49	____	____
I.50	Sūrya (1–9), spell against disease (10–13)	____
I.51	Indra	Savya Āṅgirasa
I.52	____	____
I.53	____	____
I.54	____	____
I.55	____	____
I.56	____	____
I.57	____	____
I.58	Agni	Nodhas Gautama
I.59	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
I.60	Agni	____
I.61	Indra	____
I.62	____	____
I.63	____	____
I.64	Maruts	____
I.65	Agni	Parāśara Śāktya
I.66	____	____
I.67	____	____
I.68	____	____
I.69	____	____
I.70	____	____
I.71	____	____
I.72	____	____
I.73	____	____
I.74	____	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
I.75	____	____
I.76	____	____
I.77	____	____
I.78	____	____
I.79	____	____
I.80	Indra	____

I.81	Indra	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
I.82	____	____
I.83	____	____
I.84	____	____
I.85	Maruts	____
I.86	____	____
I.87	____	____
I.88	____	____
I.89	All Gods	____
I.90	____	____
I.91	Soma	____
I.92	Dawn (1–15), Aśvins (16–18)	____
I.93	Agni and Soma	____
I.94	Agni	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.95	Agni or Agni Auṣasa	____
I.96	Agni or Agni Draviṇodā	____
I.97	Agni or Agni Śuci	____
I.98	Agni or Agni Vaiśvānara	____
I.99	Agni or Agni Jātavedas	Kaśyapa Mārīca
I.100	Indra	Five Vārṣāgira poets: R̥jrāśva, Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna, and Surādhas
I.101	____	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.102	____	____
I.103	____	____
I.104	____	____
I.105	All Gods	Trita Āptya or Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.106	____	Kutsa Āṅgirasa
I.107	____	____
I.108	Indra and Agni	____
I.109	____	____
I.110	R̥bhus	____
I.111	____	____
I.112	Heaven and Earth (1a), Agni (1b), Aśvins (1cd–25)	____
I.113	Dawn (1ab, 2–20), Dawn and Night (1cd)	____
I.114	Rudra	____
I.115	Sūrya	____
I.116	Aśvins	Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
I.117	____	____
I.118	____	____
I.119	____	____
I.120	____	____
I.121	Indra or All Gods	____
I.122	All Gods	____
I.123	Dawn	____
I.124	____	____
I.125	Svanaya's Dānastuti	____
I.126	Bhāvayavya (1–5, 7), Romaśā (6)	Kakṣīvant (1–5), Bhāvayavya (6), Romaśā (7)
I.127	Agni	Paruchepa Daivodāsi
I.128	____	____
I.129	Indra (1–5, 7–11), Indu (6)	____
I.130	Indra	____
I.131	____	____

I.132	Indra (1–5, 6defg), Indra and Parvata (6abc)	Paruchepa Daivodāsi
I.133	Indra	____
I.134	Vāyu	____
I.135	Vāyu (1–3, 9), Indra and Vāyu (4–8)	____
I.136	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (6–7)	____
I.137	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
I.138	Pūṣan	____
I.139	All Gods, or All Gods (1, 11), Mitra and Varuṇa (2), Aśvins (3–5), Indra (6) Agni (7), Maruts (8), Indra and Agni (9), Bṛhaspati (10)	____
I.140	Agni	Dīrghatamas Aucathya
I.141	____	____
I.142	Āprī (1–12), Indra (13)	____
I.143	Agni	____
I.144	____	____
I.145	____	____
I.146	____	____
I.147	____	____
I.148	____	____
I.149	____	____
I.150	____	____
I.151	Mitra (1), Mitra and Varuṇa (2–9)	____
I.152	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
I.153	____	____
I.154	Viṣṇu	____
I.155	Viṣṇu and Indra (1–3), Viṣṇu (4–6)	____
I.156	Viṣṇu	____
I.157	Aśvins	____
I.158	____	____
I.159	Heaven and Earth	____
I.160	____	____
I.161	Ṛbhus	____
I.162	Praise of a Horse	____
I.163	____	____
I.164	All Gods	____
I.165	Indra Marutvant	Indra (1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10–12), the Maruts (3, 5, 7, 9), and Agastya (13–15)
I.166	Maruts	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.167	Indra (1), Maruts (2–11)	____
I.168	Maruts	____
I.169	Indra	____
I.170	____	Indra (1, 3), Agastya (2, 5), Indra or Agastya (4)
I.171	Maruts (1–2), Indra Marutvant (3–6)	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.172	Maruts	____
I.173	Indra	____
I.174	____	____
I.175	____	____
I.176	____	____
I.177	____	____
I.178	____	____
I.179	Delight (Rati)	Lopāmudrā 1–2, Agastya 3–4, student 5–6
I.180	Aśvins	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi

I.181	Aśvins	Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi
I.182	____	____
I.183	____	____
I.184	____	____
I.185	Heaven and Earth	____
I.186	All Gods	____
I.187	Praise of Food	____
I.188	Āprī	____
I.189	Agni	____
I.190	Bṛhaspati	____
I.191	Against Poisonous Animals	____

Maṇḍala II

II.1	Agni	Gṛtsamada Bhārgava Śaunaka, originally Āṅgirasa Śaunahotra
II.2	____	____
II.3	Āprī	____
II.4	Agni	Somāhuti Bhārgava
II.5	____	____
II.6	____	____
II.7	____	____
II.8	____	Gṛtsamada
II.9	____	____
II.10	____	____
II.11	Indra	____
II.12	____	____
II.13	____	____
II.14	____	____
II.15	____	____
II.16	____	____
II.17	____	____
II.18	____	____
II.19	____	____
II.20	____	____
II.21	____	____
II.22	____	____
II.23	Bṛhaspati	____
II.24	____	____
II.25	Brahmaṇaspati	____
II.26	____	____
II.27	Ādityas	Gṛtsamada or Kūrma Gārtsamada
II.28	Varuṇa	____
II.29	All Gods	____
II.30	Indra (1–5, 7, 8cd, 10), Indra and Soma (6), Sarasvatī (8ab), Bṛhaspati (9), Maruts (11)	Gṛtsamada
II.31	All Gods	____
II.32	Various Gods	____
II.33	Rudra	____
II.34	Maruts	____
II.35	Apām Napāt	____
II.36	Sequential Deities	____
II.37	____	____
II.38	Savitar	____

II.39	Aśvins	Gṛtsamada
II.40	Soma and Pūṣan	____
II.41	Various Gods	____
II.42	Omen-Bird	____
II.43	____	____

Maṇḍala III

III.1	Agni	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.2	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
III.3	____	____
III.4	Āprī	____
III.5	Agni	____
III.6	____	____
III.7	____	____
III.8	Sacrificial Post(s)	____
III.9	Agni	____
III.10	____	____
III.11	____	____
III.12	Indra and Agni	____
III.13	Agni	Ṛṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
III.14	____	____
III.15	____	Utkīla Kātya
III.16	____	____
III.17	____	Kata Vaiśvāmitra
III.18	____	____
III.19	____	Gāthin Kauśika
III.20	All Gods (1, 5), Agni (2–4)	____
III.21	Agni	____
III.22	Purīṣya Agnis	____
III.23	Agni	Devaśravas Bhārata and Devavāta Bhārata
III.24	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.25	____	____
III.26	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
III.27	Agni	____
III.28	____	____
III.29	____	____
III.30	Indra	____
III.31	____	Kuśika Aiṣīrathi or Viśvāmitra
III.32	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.33	Rivers (1–3, 5, 9, 11–13), Viśvāmitra (4, 8, 10), and Indra (6–7)	Viśvāmitra (1–3, 5–6, 9, 11–13) and Rivers (4, 7–8, 10)
III.34	Indra	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.35	____	____
III.36	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–9, 11) and Ghora Āṅgirasa (10)
III.37	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.38	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina or Prajāpati Vaiśvānara or Prajāpati Vācya
III.39	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.40	____	____
III.41	____	____
III.42	____	____
III.43	____	____
III.44	____	____

III.45	Indra	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.46	____	____
III.47	____	____
III.48	____	____
III.49	____	____
III.50	____	____
III.51	____	____
III.52	____	____
III.53	Indra and Parvata (1), Indra (2–14, 21–24), Vāc Sasarparī (15–16), Praise of Chariot Parts (17–20)	____
III.54	All Gods	Prajāpati Vaiśvānara or Prajāpati Vācya
III.55	____	____
III.56	____	____
III.57	____	Viśvāmitra Gāthina
III.58	Aśvins	____
III.59	Mitra	____
III.60	R̥bhus (1–4), R̥bhus and Indra (5–7)	____
III.61	Dawn	____
III.62	Indra and Varuṇa (1–3), Br̥haspati (4–6), Pūṣan (7–9), Savitar (10–12), Soma (13–15), Mitra and Varuṇa (16–18)	Viśvāmitra Gāthina (1–15), Viśvāmitra or Jamadagni (16–18)

Maṇḍala IV

IV.1	Agni	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.2	____	____
IV.3	____	____
IV.4	Agni Rakṣohan	____
IV.5	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
IV.6	Agni	____
IV.7	____	____
IV.8	____	____
IV.9	____	____
IV.10	____	____
IV.11	____	____
IV.12	____	____
IV.13	Agni or Liṅgoktadevatāḥ	____
IV.14	Agni	____
IV.15	Agni (1–6), Somaka Sāhadevya (7–8), Aśvins (9–10)	____
IV.16	Indra	____
IV.17	____	____
IV.18	____	____
IV.19	____	____
IV.20	____	____
IV.21	____	____
IV.22	____	____
IV.23	Indra (1–7, 11), Indra or R̥ta (8–10)	____
IV.24	Indra	____
IV.25	____	____
IV.26	Indra (1–3), Praise of Falcon (4–7)	____
IV.27	Praise of Falcon (1–4), Falcon or Indra (5)	____
IV.28	Indra, or Indra and Soma	____

IV.29	Indra	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.30	Indra (1–8, 12–24), Indra and Dawn (9–11)	____
IV.31	Indra	____
IV.32	____	____
IV.33	R̥bhus	____
IV.34	____	____
IV.35	____	____
IV.36	____	____
IV.37	____	____
IV.38	Heaven and Earth (1), Dadhikrā (2–10)	____
IV.39	Dadhikrā	____
IV.40	Dadhikrā (1–4), Sūrya (5)	____
IV.41	Indra and Varuṇa	____
IV.42	____	Trasadasyu Paurukutsya
IV.43	Aśvins	Purumīḷha Sauhotra and Ajamīḷha Sauhotra
IV.44	____	____
IV.45	____	Vāmadeva Gautama
IV.46	Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–7)	____
IV.47	Vāyu (1), Vāyu and Indra (2–4)	____
IV.48	Vāyu	____
IV.49	Indra and Br̥haspati	____
IV.50	Br̥haspati (1–9), Br̥haspati and Indra (10–11)	____
IV.51	Dawn	____
IV.52	____	____
IV.53	Savitar	____
IV.54	____	____
IV.55	All Gods	____
IV.56	Heaven and Earth	____
IV.57	Agricultural Divinities	____
IV.58	Praise of Ghee	____

Maṇḍala V

V.1	Agni	Budha Ātreya or Gaviṣṭhira Ātreya
V.2	____	Kumāra Ātreya or Vr̥śa Jāna or both
V.3	____	Vasuśruta Ātreya
V.4	____	____
V.5	Āprī	____
V.6	Agni	____
V.7	____	Iṣa Ātreya
V.8	____	____
V.9	____	Gaya Ātreya
V.10	____	____
V.11	____	Sutambhara Ātreya
V.12	____	____
V.13	____	____
V.14	____	____
V.15	____	Dharuṇa Āṅgirasa
V.16	____	Pūru Ātreya
V.17	____	____
V.18	____	Mr̥ktavāhas Dvita Ātreya

V.19	Agni	Vavri Ātreya
V.20	____	Prayasvanta Ātreya
V.21	____	Sasa Ātreya
V.22	____	Viśvasāman Ātreya
V.23	____	Dyumna Viśvacarṣaṇi Ātreya
V.24	____	The Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas: Bandhu (1), Subandhu (2), Śrutabandhu (3), and Viprabandhu (4)
V.25	____	The Vasūyava Ātreyas
V.26	____	____
V.27	____	Kings Tryaruṇa Traivr̥ṣṇa, Trasadasyu Paurukutsya, and Aśvamedha Bhārata, or Atri Bhauma
V.28	____	Viśvavārā Ātreyī
V.29	Indra	Gaurivīti Śāktya
V.30	____	Babhru Ātreya
V.31	____	Avasyu Ātreya
V.32	____	Gātu Ātreya
V.33	____	Saṃvaraṇa Prājāpatya
V.34	____	____
V.35	____	Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
V.36	____	____
V.37	____	Atri Bhauma
V.38	____	____
V.39	____	____
V.40	Indra (1–4), Sūrya (5), Atri (6–9)	____
V.41	All Gods	____
V.42	____	____
V.43	____	____
V.44	____	Avatsāra Kāśyapa and others
V.45	____	Sadāpr̥ṇa Ātreya
V.46	____	Pratikṣatra Ātreya
V.47	____	Pratiratha Ātreya
V.48	____	Pratibhānu Ātreya
V.49	____	Pratibha Ātreya
V.50	____	Svastyātreya Ātreya
V.51	____	____
V.52	Maruts	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
V.53	____	____
V.54	____	____
V.55	____	____
V.56	____	____
V.57	____	____
V.58	____	____
V.59	____	____
V.60	____	____
V.61	____	____
V.62	Mitra and Varuṇa	Śrutavid Ātreya
V.63	____	Arcanānas Ātreya
V.64	____	____
V.65	____	Rātahavya Ātreya
V.66	____	____
V.67	____	Yajata Ātreya
V.68	____	____
V.69	____	Urucakri Ātreya

V.70	Mitra and Varuṇa	Urucakri Ātreya
V.71	____	Bāhuvr̥kta Ātreya
V.72	____	____
V.73	Aśvins	Paura Ātreya
V.74	____	____
V.75	____	Avasyu Ātreya
V.76	____	Atri Bhauma
V.77	____	____
V.78	____	Saptavadhri Ātreya
V.79	Dawn	Satyaśravas Ātreya
V.80	____	____
V.81	Savitar	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
V.82	____	____
V.83	Parjanya	Atri Bhauma
V.84	Earth	____
V.85	Varuṇa	____
V.86	Indra and Agni	____
V.87	Maruts	Evayāmarut Ātreya

Maṇḍala VI

VI.1	Agni	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.2	____	____
VI.3	____	____
VI.4	____	____
VI.5	____	____
VI.6	____	____
VI.7	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
VI.8	____	____
VI.9	____	____
VI.10	Agni	____
VI.11	____	____
VI.12	____	____
VI.13	____	____
VI.14	____	____
VI.15	____	Vītahavya Āṅgirasa or Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.16	____	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.17	____	____
VI.18	____	____
VI.19	____	____
VI.20	____	____
VI.21	Indra (1–8, 10, 12), All Gods (9, 11)	____
VI.22	Indra	____
VI.23	____	____
VI.24	____	____
VI.25	____	____
VI.26	____	____
VI.27	____	____
VI.28	Cows (1–3, 7–8c) Indra (2, 8d)	____
VI.29	Indra	____
VI.30	____	____
VI.31	____	Suhotra Bhāradvāja
VI.32	____	____
VI.33	____	Śunahotra Bhāradvāja
VI.34	____	____

VI.35	Indra	Nara Bhāradvāja
VI.36	____	____
VI.37	____	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.38	____	____
VI.39	____	____
VI.40	____	____
VI.41	____	____
VI.42	____	____
VI.43	____	____
VI.44	____	Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
VI.45	Indra (1–30), Bṛbu Takṣan (31–33)	____
VI.46	Indra	____
VI.47	Soma (1–5), Indra (6–19, 20d, 21, 31cd), Gods (20a), Earth (20b), Bṛhaspati (20c), Prastoka Sārūjaya's Dānastuti (22–25), Chariot (26–28), Drum (29–31ab)	Garga Bhāradvāja
VI.48	Agni (1–10), Maruts (11–12, 20–21), Maruts or Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (13–15), Pūṣan (16–19), Maruts or Heaven and Earth or Pṛśni (22)	Śaṃyu Bārhaspatya
VI.49	All Gods	Ṛjiśvan Bhāradvāja
VI.50	____	____
VI.51	____	____
VI.52	____	____
VI.53	Pūṣan	Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya
VI.54	____	____
VI.55	____	____
VI.56	____	____
VI.57	Indra and Pūṣan	____
VI.58	Pūṣan	____
VI.59	Indra and Agni	____
VI.60	____	____
VI.61	Sarasvatī	____
VI.62	Aśvins	____
VI.63	____	____
VI.64	Dawn	____
VI.65	____	____
VI.66	Maruts	____
VI.67	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
VI.68	Indra and Varuṇa	____
VI.69	Indra and Viṣṇu	____
VI.70	Heaven and Earth	____
VI.71	Savitar	____
VI.72	Indra and Soma	____
VI.73	Bṛhaspati	____
VI.74	Soma and Rudra	____
VI.75	Weapons	Pāyu Bhāradvāja

Maṇḍala VII

VII.1	Agni	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.2	Āprī	____
VII.3	Agni	____
VII.4	____	____
VII.5	Agni Vaiśvānara	____

VII.6	Agni Vaiśvānara	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.7	Agni	____
VII.8	____	____
VII.9	____	____
VII.10	____	____
VII.11	____	____
VII.12	____	____
VII.13	Agni Vaiśvānara	____
VII.14	Agni	____
VII.15	____	____
VII.16	____	____
VII.17	____	____
VII.18	Battle of the Ten Kings: Indra (1–21), Sudās Paijavana's Dānastuti (22–25)	____
VII.19	Indra	____
VII.20	____	____
VII.21	____	____
VII.22	____	____
VII.23	____	____
VII.24	____	____
VII.25	____	____
VII.26	____	____
VII.27	____	____
VII.28	____	____
VII.29	____	____
VII.30	____	____
VII.31	____	____
VII.32	____	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–25), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26ab), Vasiṣṭha or Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (26cd–27)
VII.33	Vasiṣṭha's Sons (1–9), Vasiṣṭha (10–14)	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (1–9), Vasiṣṭha's sons (10–14)
VII.34	All Gods (1–15, 17cd, 18–25), Ahi (16), Ahi Budhnya (17ab)	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.35	All Gods	____
VII.36	____	____
VII.37	____	____
VII.38	Savitar (1–5, 6ab), Savitar or Bhaga (6cd), Prizewinning Horses (7–8)	____
VII.39	All Gods	____
VII.40	____	____
VII.41	Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (1), Bhaga (2–6) Dawn (7)	____
VII.42	All Gods	____
VII.43	____	____
VII.44	Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (1), Dadhikrā (2–5)	____
VII.45	Savitar	____
VII.46	Rudra	____
VII.47	Waters	____
VII.48	Ṛbhus	____
VII.49	Waters	____
VII.50	Mitra and Varuṇa (1), Agni (2), All Gods (3), Rivers (4)	____
VII.51	Ādityas	____

VII.52	Ādityas	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.53	Heaven and Earth	____
VII.54	Vāstoṣpati	____
VII.55	Vāstoṣpati (1), Sleep Incantations (2–8)	____
VII.56	Maruts	____
VII.57	____	____
VII.58	____	____
VII.59	Maruts (1–11), Rudra (12)	____
VII.60	Sūrya (1), Mitra and Varuṇa (2–12)	____
VII.61	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
VII.62	Sūrya (1–3), Mitra and Varuṇa (4–6)	____
VII.63	Sūrya (1–5ab), Mitra and Varuṇa (5cd–6)	____
VII.64	Mitra and Varuṇa	____
VII.65	____	____
VII.66	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–3, 17–19), Ādityas (4–13), Sūrya (14–16)	____
VII.67	Aśvins	____
VII.68	____	____
VII.69	____	____
VII.70	____	____
VII.71	____	____
VII.72	____	____
VII.73	____	____
VII.74	____	____
VII.75	Dawn	____
VII.76	____	____
VII.77	____	____
VII.78	____	____
VII.79	____	____
VII.80	____	____
VII.81	____	____
VII.82	Indra and Varuṇa	____
VII.83	____	____
VII.84	____	____
VII.85	____	____
VII.86	Varuṇa	____
VII.87	____	____
VII.88	____	____
VII.89	____	____
VII.90	Vāyu (1–4), Indra and Vāyu (5–7)	____
VII.91	Vāyu (1, 3), Indra and Vāyu (2, 4–7)	____
VII.92	Vāyu (1, 3–5), Indra and Vāyu (2)	____
VII.93	Indra and Agni	____
VII.94	____	____
VII.95	Sarasvatī (1–2, 4–6), Sarasvant (3)	____
VII.96	Sarasvatī (1–3), Sarasvant (4–6)	____
VII.97	Indra (1), Bṛhaspati (2, 4–8), Indra and Brahmaṇaspati (3, 9), Indra and Bṛhaspati (10)	____
VII.98	Indra (1–6), Indra and Bṛhaspati (7)	____
VII.99	Viṣṇu (1–3, 7), Indra and Viṣṇu (4–6)	____
VII.100	Viṣṇu	____
VII.101	Parjanya	Kumara Āgneya or Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.102	____	____

VII.103	Frogs	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
VII.104	Destroying Demons, Using Imprecations and Curses: Indra and Soma (1–7, 15, 25), Indra (8, 16, 19–22, 24), Soma (9, 12–13), Agni (10, 14), Gods (11), Pressing Stones (17) Maruts (18), Vasiṣṭha's Hopes for Himself (23ab), Earth and Midspace (23cd)	____

Maṇḍala VIII

VIII.1	Indra (1–29), Dānastuti of Āsaṅga (30–33), Āsaṅga (34)	Pragātha Kāṇva (formerly Pragātha Ghaura, brother and adoptive son of Kaṇva, 1–2), Medhātithi and Medhyātithi Kāṇva (3–29), Āsaṅga Plāyogi (30–33), Śaśvatī Āṅgirasī, wife of Āsaṅga (34)
VIII.2	Indra (1–40), Vibindhu's Dānastuti (41–42)	Medhātithi Kāṇva and Priyamedha Āṅgirasa (1–40), Medhātithi Kāṇva (41–42)
VIII.3	Indra (1–20), Pākasthāman Kaurayāṇa's Dānastuti (21–24)	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
VIII.4	Indra (1–14), Indra or Pūṣan (15–18) Kuruṅga's Dānastuti (19–21)	Devātithi Kāṇva
VIII.5	Aśvins	Brahmātithi Kāṇva
VIII.6	Indra (1–45), Tirindira Pārśavya's Dānastuti (46–48)	Vatsa Kāṇva
VIII.7	Maruts	Punarvatsa Kāṇva
VIII.8	Aśvins	Sadhvaṃsa Kāṇva
VIII.9	____	Śaśakarṇa Kāṇva
VIII.10	____	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.11	Agni	Vatsa Kāṇva
VIII.12	Indra	Parvata Kāṇva
VIII.13	____	Nārada Kāṇva
VIII.14	____	Goṣūktin Kāṇvāyana and Aśvasūktin Kāṇvāyana
VIII.15	____	____
VIII.16	____	Irimbiṭhi Kāṇva
VIII.17	____	____
VIII.18	Ādityas	____
VIII.19	Agni (1–33), Ādityas (34–35), Trasadasyu's Dānastuti (36–37)	Sobhari Kāṇva
VIII.20	Maruts	____
VIII.21	Indra (1–16), Citra's Dānastuti (17–18)	____
VIII.22	Aśvins	____
VIII.23	Agni	Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva
VIII.24	Indra	____
VIII.25	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–9, 13–24) and the All Gods (10–12)	____
VIII.26	Aśvins (1–19), Vāyu (20–25)	Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva or Vyaśva Āṅgirasa

VIII.27	All Gods	Manu Vaivasvata
VIII.28	____	____
VIII.29	____	Manu Vaivasvata or Kaśyapa Mārīca
VIII.30	____	Manu Vaivasvata
VIII.31	Yajamāna and Patnī [Praise of the Offering and Laud of the Sacrificer (1–4), Household (5–9), Blessing for the Household Pair (10–18)]	____
VIII.32	Indra	Medhātithi Kāṇva
VIII.33	____	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
VIII.34	____	Nīpātithi Kāṇva (1–15), the thousand ṛṣis of Vasurocis Āṅgirasa (16–18)
VIII.35	Aśvins	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
VIII.36	Indra	____
VIII.37	____	____
VIII.38	Indra and Agni	____
VIII.39	Agni	Nābhāka Kāṇva
VIII.40	Indra and Agni	____
VIII.41	Varuṇa	____
VIII.42	Varuṇa (1–3), Aśvins (4–6)	Arcanānas or Nābhāka Kāṇva
VIII.43	Agni	Virūpa Āṅgirasa
VIII.44	____	____
VIII.45	Agni and Indra (1), Indra (2–42)	Triśoka Kāṇva
VIII.46	Indra (1–20), Pṛthuśravas Kānīta's Dānastuti (21–24), Vāyu (25–28), Dānastuti (29–33)	Vaśa Aśvya
VIII.47	Ādityas	Trita Āptya
VIII.48	Soma	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.49	Indra	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
VIII.50	____	Puṣṭigu Kāṇva
VIII.51	____	Śruṣṭigu Kāṇva
VIII.52	____	Āyu Kāṇva
VIII.53	____	Medhya Kāṇva
VIII.54	Indra (1–2, 5–8), All Gods (3–4)	Mātariśvan Kāṇva
VIII.55	Praskaṇva's Dānastuti	Kṛśa Kāṇva
VIII.56	Praskaṇva's Dānastuti (1–4), Agni and Sūrya (5)	Pṛṣadhra Kāṇva
VIII.57	Aśvins	Medhya Kāṇva
VIII.58	(Fragment)	(No attribution)
VIII.59	Indra and Varuṇa	Suparṇa Kāṇva
VIII.60	Agni	Bharga Prāgatha
VIII.61	Indra	____
VIII.62	____	Pragātha Kāṇva
VIII.63	Indra (1–11), Gods (12)	____
VIII.64	Indra	____
VIII.65	____	____
VIII.66	____	Kali Prāgātha
VIII.67	Ādityas	Matsya Sāmmada or Mānya Maitrāvaruṇi or many fish caught in a net
VIII.68	Indra (1–13), Dānastuti of Ṛkṣa and Āśvamedha (14–19)	Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
VIII.69	Indra (1–10, 13–18), All Gods (11ab), Varuṇa (11cd–12)	____

VIII.70	Indra	Puruhanman Āṅgirasa
VIII.71	Agni	Sudīti Āṅgirasa and/or Purumīḷha Āṅgirasa
VIII.72	Agni or Praise of Oblations	Haryata Prāgātha
VIII.73	Aśvins	Gopavana Ātreya or Saptavadhri Ātreya
VIII.74	Agni (1–12), Śrutarvan Ārkṣya's Dānastuti (13–15)	Gopavana Ātreya
VIII.75	Agni	Virupa Āṅgirasa
VIII.76	Indra	Kurusuti Kāṇva
VIII.77	____	____
VIII.78	____	____
VIII.79	Soma	Kr̥tnu Bhārgava
VIII.80	Indra (1–9), Gods (10)	Ekadyū Naudhasa
VIII.81	Indra	Kusīdin Kāṇva
VIII.82	____	____
VIII.83	All Gods	____
VIII.84	Agni	Uśanas Kāvya
VIII.85	Aśvins	Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
VIII.86	____	Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa or Viśvaka Kārṣṇi
VIII.87	____	Dyumnīka Vāsiṣṭha or Priyamedha Āṅgirasa or Kr̥ṣṇa Āṅgirasa
VIII.88	Indra	Nodhas Gautama
VIII.89	____	Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa and Purumedha Āṅgirasa
VIII.90	____	____
VIII.91	____	Apālā Ātreyī
VIII.92	____	Śrutakakṣa Āṅgirasa or Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.93	Indra (1–33), Indra and the R̥bhus (34)	Sukakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.94	Maruts	Bindu Āṅgirasa or Pūtadakṣa Āṅgirasa
VIII.95	Indra	Tiraścī Āṅgirasa
VIII.96	Indra (1–14c), Maruts (14d), Indra and Br̥haspati (15)	Tiraścī Āṅgirasa or Dyutāna Āṅgirasa
VIII.97	Indra	Rebha Kāśyapa
VIII.98	____	Nr̥medha Āṅgirasa
VIII.99	____	____
VIII.100	Indra (1–9, 12), Vāc (10–11)	Nema Bhārgava (1–3, 6–12), Indra (4–5)
VIII.101	Mitra and Varuṇa (1–5c), Ādityas (5d–6), Aśvins (7–8), Vāyu (9–10), Sūrya (11–12), Dawn or Praise of the Sun's Radiance (13), Pavamāna (14), Cow (15–16)	Jamadagni Bhārgava
VIII.102	Agni	Prayoga Bhārgava or Agni Pāvaka Bārhaspatya or Agni Gr̥hapati Sahasaḥ Sūnu and Agni Yaviṣṭha Sahasaḥ Sūnu (together or one or the other)
VIII.103	Agni (1–13), Agni and the Maruts (14)	Sobhari Kāṇva

Maṇḍala IX

IX.1	Soma Pavamāna	Madhuchandas Vaiśvāmitra
IX.2	____	Medhātithi Kāṇva

IX.3	Soma Pavamāna	Śunaḥśepa Ājīgarti
IX.4	____	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
IX.5	Āprī	Asita Kāśyapa or Devala Kāśyapa
IX.6	Soma Pavamāna	____
IX.7	____	____
IX.8	____	____
IX.9	____	____
IX.10	____	____
IX.11	____	____
IX.12	____	____
IX.13	____	____
IX.14	____	____
IX.15	____	____
IX.16	____	____
IX.17	____	____
IX.18	____	____
IX.19	____	____
IX.20	____	____
IX.21	____	____
IX.22	____	____
IX.23	____	____
IX.24	____	____
IX.25	____	Dṛḍhacyuta Āgastya
IX.26	____	Idhmavāha Dārḍhacyuta
IX.27	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
IX.28	____	Priyamedha Āṅgirasa
IX.29	____	Nṛmedha Āṅgirasa
IX.30	____	Bindu Āṅgirasa
IX.31	____	Gotama Rāhūgaṇa
IX.32	____	Śyāvāśva Ātreya
IX.33	____	Trita Āptya
IX.34	____	____
IX.35	____	Prabhūvasu Āṅgirasa
IX.36	____	____
IX.37	____	Rahūgaṇa Āṅgirasa
IX.38	____	____
IX.39	____	Bṛhanmati Āṅgirasa
IX.40	____	____
IX.41	____	Medhyātithi Kāṇva
IX.42	____	____
IX.43	____	____
IX.44	____	Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
IX.45	____	____
IX.46	____	____
IX.47	____	Kavi Bhārgava
IX.48	____	____
IX.49	____	____
IX.50	____	Ucathya Āṅgirasa
IX.51	____	____
IX.52	____	____
IX.53	____	Avatsāra Kāśyapa
IX.54	____	____
IX.55	____	____
IX.56	____	____
IX.57	____	____

IX.58	Soma Pavamāna	Avatsāra Kāśyapa
IX.59	____	____
IX.60	____	____
IX.61	____	Amahīya Āṅgirasa
IX.62	____	Jamadagni Bhārgava
IX.63	____	Nidhruvi Kāśyapa
IX.64	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.65	____	Bhr̥gu Vāruṇi or Jamadagni Bhārgava
IX.66	Soma Pavamāna (1–18, 22–30), Agni (19–21)	One hundred Vaikhānasa poets
IX.67	Soma Pavamāna (1–9, 13–22, 28–30), Soma Pavamāna or Pūṣan (10–12), Agni (23, 24), Agni or Savitar (25), Agni or Agni and Savitar (26), Agni or the All Gods (27), Praise of the Student of the Pavamānī Verses (31–32)	Bharadvāja (1–3), Kaśyapa (4–6,) Gotama (7–9), Atri (10–12), Viśvāmitra (13–15), Jamadagni (16–18), Vasiṣṭha (19–21), Pavitra Āṅgirasa or Vasiṣṭha or both (22–32)
IX.68	Soma Pavamāna	Vatsaprī Bhālandana
IX.69	____	Hiraṇyastūpa Āṅgirasa
IX.70	____	Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
IX.71	____	R̥ṣabha Vaiśvāmitra
IX.72	____	Harimanta Āṅgirasa
IX.73	____	Pavitra Āṅgirasa
IX.74	____	Kakṣīvant Dairghatamasa
IX.75	____	Kavi Bhārgava
IX.76	____	____
IX.77	____	____
IX.78	____	____
IX.79	____	____
IX.80	____	Vasu Bhāradvāja
IX.81	____	____
IX.82	____	____
IX.83	____	Pavitra Āṅgirasa
IX.84	____	Prajāpati Vācya
IX.85	____	Vena Bhārgava
IX.86	____	Akr̥ṣṭās, the Māṣā seer-group (1–10), Siktatās, the Nivāvarī seer-group (11–20), Pr̥śnis, the Ajā seer-group (21–30), Atris (31–40), Atri Bhauma (41–45), Gr̥tsamada (46–48)
IX.87	____	Uśanas Kāvya
IX.88	____	____
IX.89	____	____
IX.90	____	Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi
IX.91	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.92	____	____
IX.93	____	Nodhas Gautama
IX.94	____	Kaṇva Ghaura
IX.95	____	Praskaṇva Kāṇva
IX.96	____	Pratardana Daivodāsi
IX.97	____	Vasiṣṭha (1–3), Indrapramati Vāsiṣṭha (4–6), Vr̥ṣagaṇa Vāsiṣṭha (7–9), Manyu Vāsiṣṭha (10–12), Upamanyu Vāsiṣṭha (13–15), Vyāghrapād Vāsiṣṭha (16–18),

		Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (19–21), Karṇaśrut Vāsiṣṭha (22–24), Mṛḷīka Vāsiṣṭha (25–27), Vasukra Vāsiṣṭha (28–30), Parāśara Śāktya (31–44), Kutsa Āṅgirasa (45–58)
IX.98	Soma Pavamāna	Ambarīṣa Vārṣāgira and R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja
IX.99	____	Two sons of Rebha, the Kāśyapas
IX.100	____	____
IX.101	____	Andhīgu Śyāvāśvi (1–3), Yayāti Nāhuṣa (4–6), Nahuṣa Mānava (7–9), Manu Sāṃvaraṇa (10–12), Prajāpati (13–16)
IX.102	____	Trita Āptya
IX.103	____	Dvita Āptya
IX.104	____	Parvata Kāṇva and Nārada Kāṇva, or the two Apsarases named Śikhaṇḍinī, daughters of Kaśyapa
IX.105	____	Parvata and Nārada
IX.106	____	Agni Cākṣuṣa (1–3), Cakṣus Mānava (4–6), Manu Āpsava (7–9), Agni Cākṣuṣa (10–14)
IX.107	____	Seven Seers
IX.108	____	Gaurivīti Śāktya (1–2), Śakti Vāsiṣṭha (3, 14–16), Ūru Āṅgirasa (4–5), R̥jiśvan Bhāradvāja (6–7), Ūrdhvasadman Āṅgirasa (8–9), Kr̥tayaśas Āṅgirasa (10–11), R̥ṇaṃcaya (12–13)
IX.109	____	Dhiṣṇya Fires, descendants of Īśvara
IX.110	____	Tryaruṇa and Trasadasyu
IX.111	____	Anānata Pārucchepi
IX.112	____	Śiśu Āṅgirasa
IX.113	____	Kaśyapa Mārīca
IX.114	____	____

Maṇḍala X

X.1	Agni	Trita Āptya
X.2	____	____
X.3	____	____
X.4	____	____
X.5	____	____
X.6	____	____
X.7	____	____
X.8	Agni (1–6), Indra (7–9)	Triśiras Tvāṣṭra
X.9	Waters	Triśiras Tvāṣṭra or Sindhudvīpa Āmbarīṣa
X.10	Yama and Yamī	Yama Vaivasvata (2, 4, 8–10, 12, 14), Yamī Vaivasvatī (1, 3, 5–7, 11, 13)
X.11	Agni	Havirdhāna Āṅgi
X.12	____	____

X.13	Soma Carts	Havirdhāna Āṅgi or Vivasvant Āditya
X.14	Yama (1–5, 13–16), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (6), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ or the Pitars (7–9), the Two Dogs, Offspring of Saramā (10–12)	Yama Vaivasvata
X.15	Pitars	Śaṅkha Yāmāyana
X.16	Agni	Damana Yāmāyana
X.17	Saraṇyū (1–2), Pūṣan (3–6), Sarasvatī (7–9), the Waters (10, 14), the Waters or Soma (11–13)	Devaśravas Yāmāyana
X.18	Death (1–4), Dhātar (5), Tvaṣṭar (6) Pitṛmedhas (7–13), Pitṛmedha or Prajāpati (14)	Saṃkusuka Yāmāyana
X.19	Waters or Cows (1ab, 2–7), Agni and Soma (1cd)	Mathita Yāmāyana or Bhṛgu Vāruṇi or Cyavana Bhārgava
X.20	Agni	Vimada Aindra or Vimada Prajāpātya or Vasukṛt Vāsukra
X.21	____	____
X.22	Indra	____
X.23	____	____
X.24	Indra (1–3), Aśvins (4–6)	____
X.25	Soma	____
X.26	Pūṣan	____
X.27	Indra	Vasukra Aindra
X.28	Wife of Vasukra (1), Indra (2, 6, 8, 10, 12), Vasukra (3–5, 7, 9, 11)	____
X.29	Indra	____
X.30	Waters or Apām Napāt	Kavaṣa Ailūṣa
X.31	All Gods	____
X.32	Indra	____
X.33	Lament of a Singer: All Gods (1), Indra (2–3), Dānastuti of Kuruśravana Trāsadasyava (4–5), Upamaśravas Mitrātithiputra (6–9)	____
X.34	Gambler	Kavaṣa Ailūṣa or Akṣa Maujavant
X.35	All Gods	Luśa Dhānāka
X.36	____	____
X.37	Sūrya	Abhitapas Saurya
X.38	Indra	Indra Muṣkavant
X.39	Aśvins	Ghoṣā Kākṣīvatī
X.40	____	____
X.41	____	Suhastya Ghauṣeya
X.42	Indra	Kṛṣṇa Āṅgirasa
X.43	____	____
X.44	____	____
X.45	Agni	Vatsaprī Bhālandana
X.46	____	____
X.47	Indra	Saptagu Āṅgirasa
X.48	Indra Vaikuṇṭha	Indra Vaikuṇṭha
X.49	____	____
X.50	____	____
X.51	Dialogue between Agni and the Gods	Agni Saucīka
X.52	Address to the Gods from Agni	____
X.53	Agni	____

X.54	Indra	Bṛhaduktha Vāmadevya
X.55	Indra [or All Gods?]	____
X.56	All Gods	____
X.57	____	Bandhu, Subandhu, Śrutabandhu, and Viprabandhu, the four Gaupāyanas or Laupāyanas
X.58	Return of Mind	____
X.59	Nirṛti (1–3), Nirṛti and Soma (4), Asunīti (5–6), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (7), Heaven and Earth (8–10) or Indra (10ab)	____
X.60	Asamāti (1–4, 6), Indra (5), Spell to Heal Subandhu (7–11), Praise of the Hand (12)	Four Gaupāyanas (1–5, 7–9), their mother (6)
X.61	All Gods	Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava
X.62	____	____
X.63	____	Gaya Plāta
X.64	____	____
X.65	____	Vasukarṇa Vāsukra
X.66	____	____
X.67	Bṛhaspati	Ayāsya Āṅgirasa
X.68	____	____
X.69	Agni	Sumitra Vādhryaśva
X.70	Āprī	____
X.71	Wisdom	Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa
X.72	Gods	Bṛhaspati Āṅgirasa, Bṛhaspati Laukya, or Aditi Dākṣāyaṇī
X.73	Indra	Gaurivīti Śāktya
X.74	____	____
X.75	Rivers	Sindhukṣit Praiyamedha
X.76	Pressing Stones	The snake Jaratkarṇa Airāvata
X.77	Maruts	Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava
X.78	____	____
X.79	Agni	Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara or Sapti Vājambhara
X.80	____	Agni Saucīka or Agni Vaiśvānara
X.81	Viśvakarman	Viśvakarman Bhauvana
X.82	____	____
X.83	Battle Fury	Manyu Tāpasa
X.84	____	____
X.85	Wedding	Sūryā Sāvitrī
X.86	Vṛṣākapi (Conversation of Vṛṣākapi Aindra, Indrāṇī, and Indra)	Indra (1, 8, 11–12, 14, 19–22), Indrāṇī (2–6, 9–10, 15–18), Vṛṣākapi Aindra (7, 13, 23)
X.87	Agni Rakṣohan	Pāyu Bhāradvāja
X.88	Sūrya and Vaiśvānara	Mūrdhanvant Āṅgirasa or Vāmadevya
X.89	Indra	Reṇu Vaiśvāmitra
X.90	Puruṣa	Nārāyaṇa
X.91	Agni	Aruṇa Vaitahavya
X.92	All Gods	Śāryāta Mānava
X.93	____	Tānva Pārtha
X.94	Pressing Stones	The snake Arbuda Kādraveya
X.95	Purūravas and Urvaśī	Purūravas Aiḷa (1, 3, 6, 8–10, 12, 14, 17), Urvaśī (2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18)
X.96	Praise of Indra's Horses	Baru Āṅgirasa or Sarvahari Aindra
X.97	Plants	Bhiṣaj Ātharvaṇa

X.98	Devāpi's Plea for Rain	Devāpi Ārṣṭiṣeṇa
X.99	Indra	Vamra Vaikhānasa
X.100	All Gods	Duvasyu Vāndana
X.101	Priests	Budha Saumya
X.102	Race of Mudgala and Mudgalānī	Mudgala Bhārmyaśva
X.103	Indra (1–3, 5–11), Bṛhaspati (4), Āpva (12), Indra or the Maruts (13)	Apratiratha Aindra
X.104	Indra	Aṣṭaka Vaiśvāmitra
X.105	____	Durmitra/Sumitra Kautsa
X.106	Aśvins	Bhūtāṃśa Kāśyapa
X.107	Dakṣiṇā (Priestly Gift) or Its Givers	Divya Āṅgirasa or Dakṣiṇā Prājāpatyā
X.108	Saramā and the Paṇis	Paṇis (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), Saramā (2, 4, 6, 8, 10–11)
X.109	All Gods	Juhū Brahmajayā or Ūrdhvanābhan Brāhma
X.110	Āprī	Jamadagni Bhārgava or Rāma Jāmadagnya
X.111	Indra	Aṣṭrādaṃṣṭra Vairūpa
X.112	____	Nabhaḥprebhedana Vairūpa
X.113	____	Śataprabhedana Vairūpa
X.114	All Gods	Sadhri Vairūpa or Gharma Tāpasa
X.115	Agni	Upastuta Vārṣṭihavya
X.116	Indra	Agniyuta (or Agniyūpa) Sthaura
X.117	Praise of Generosity	Bhikṣu Āṅgirasa
X.118	Agni Rakṣohan	Urukṣaya Āmahīyava
X.119	Self-Praise of the "Lapwing"	Laba Aindra
X.120	Indra	Bṛhaddiva Ātharvaṇa
X.121	Ka "Who?"	Hiraṇyagarbha Prājāpatya
X.122	Agni	Citramahas Vāsiṣṭha
X.123	Vena	Vena Bhārgava
X.124	Agni (1–4), as mentioned (5–8), Indra (9)	Agni (2–4), Agni, Varuṇa, and Soma (1, 5–9)
X.125	Speech	Vāc Āmbhṛṇa
X.126	All Gods	Kulmalabarhiṣa Śailūṣi or Aṃhomuc Vāmadevya
X.127	Night	Kuśika Saubhara or Rātri Bhāradvājī
X.128	All Gods	Vihavya Āṅgirasa
X.129	Creation	Prajāpati Parameṣṭhin
X.130	Creation of the Sacrifice	Yajña Prājapatya
X.131	Indra (1–3, 6–7), Aśvins (4–5)	Sukīrti Kākṣīvata
X.132	Mitra and Varuṇa	Śākapūta Nārmedha
X.133	Indra	Sudās Paijavana
X.134	____	Māndhātar Yauvanāśva (1–6ab), Godhā (6cdef-7)
X.135	Yama	Kumāra Yāmāyana
X.136	Muni [the Keśins, "Long-Haired Ones"]	Vātaraśana's seven sons, the munis Jūti (1),Vātajūti (2), Viprajūti (2), Vṛṣāṇaka (4), Karikrata (5), Etaśa (6), Ṛśyaśṛṅga (7)
X.137	All Gods	Bharadvāja (1), Kaśyapa (2), Gotama (3), Atri (4), Viśvāmitra (5), Jamadagni (6), Vasiṣṭha (7)
X.138	Indra	Aṅga Aurava
X.139	Sūrya (1–3), Viśvāvasu (4–6)	Viśvāsu Devagandharva
X.140	Agni	Agni Pāvaka
X.141	All Gods	Agni Tāpasa
X.142	Agni	The four Śārṅgas: Jaritar (1–2), Droṇa (3–4), Sārisṛkva (5–6), Stambamitra (7–8)
X.143	Aśvins	Atri Sāṃkhya

X.144	Indra	Suparṇa Tārkṣyaputra or Ūrdhvakṛśana Yāmāyana
X.145	Against Cowives	Indrāṇī
X.146	Lady of the Wilderness (Araṇyānī)	Devamuni Airammada
X.147	Indra	Suvedas Śairīṣi
X.148	____	Pṛthu Vainya
X.149	Savitar	Arcat Hairaṇyastūpa
X.150	Agni	Mṛḷīka Vāsiṣṭha
X.151	Śraddhā	Śraddhā Kāmāyanī
X.152	Indra	Śāsa Bhāradvāja
X.153	____	Devajāmaya Indramātaraḥ
X.154	To a Dead Man	Yamī
X.155	Spell to Remove Misfortune (1, 4), Brahmaṇaspati (2–3), All Gods (5)	Śirimbiṭha Bhāradvāja
X.156	Agni	Ketu Āgneya
X.157	All Gods	Bhuvana Āptya or Sādhana Bhauvana
X.158	Sūrya	Cakṣus Saurya
X.159	Against Cowives	Śacī Paulomī
X.160	Indra	Purāṇa Vaiśvāmitra
X.161	Against Diseases	Yakṣmanāśana Prājāpatya
X.162	Against Miscarriage	Rakṣohan Brāhma
X.163	Against Disease	Vivṛhan Kāśyapa
X.164	Against Nightmare	Pracetas Āṅgirasa
X.165	All Gods (Bird of Ill Omen)	Kapota Nairṛta
X.166	Against Rivals	Ṛṣabha Vairāja or Ṛṣabha Śākvara
X.167	Indra (1–2, 4), Liṅgoktadevatāḥ (3)	Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni
X.168	Vāyu	Anila Vātāyana
X.169	Cows	Śabara Kākṣīvata
X.170	Sūrya	Vibhrāj Saurya
X.171	Indra	Iṭa Bhārgava
X.172	Dawn	Saṃvarta Āṅgirasa
X.173	Praise of the King (Royal Consecration)	Dhruva Āṅgirasa
X.174	Praise of the King	Abhīvarta Āṅgirasa
X.175	Pressing Stones	Ūrdhvagrāvan Āṅgirasa
X.176	Ṛbhus (1), Agni (2–4)	Sūnu Ārbhava
X.177	Pataṃga	Pataṃga Prājāpatya
X.178	Tārkṣya	Ariṣṭanemi Tārkṣya
X.179	Indra	Śibi Auśīnara (1), Pratardana Daivodāsi (2), Vasumanas Rauhidaśva (3)
X.180	____	Jaya Aindri
X.181	All Gods	Pratha Vāsiṣṭha (1), Sapratha Bhāradvāja (2), Gharma Saurya (3)
X.182	Bṛhaspati	Tapurmūrdhan Bārhaspatya
X.183	For the Birth of a Son [Sacrificer (1), the Sacrificer's Wife (2), and the Hotar (3)]	Prajāvant Prājāpatya
X.184	Pregnancy/Birth Charm [Liṅgoktadevatāḥ]	Tvaṣṭar Garbhakartar or Viṣṇu Prājāpatya
X.185	Aditi	Satyadhṛti Vāruṇi
X.186	Vāyu	Ula Vātāyana
X.187	Agni	Vatsa Āgneya
X.188	Agni Jātavedas	Śyena Āgneya
X.189	Sārparājñī or Sūrya	Sārparājñī
X.190	Bhavāvṛttam	Aghamarṣaṇa Mādhuchandasa
X.191	Agni (1), Unity (2–4)	Saṃvanana Āṅgirasa